

2005 JUL -8 AM 3:15

HENDERSON, NEVADA

U S Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
NVS-210 400 7th Street SW
Washington, D. C. 20590

Re: Towing Honda autos behind a Motor home

I am writing this letter to inform you of a very potentially dangerous situation for the Honda America Corporation automobiles in this country. The unibody frame on their vehicles, and it could be other manufacturers that utilize these frames, have metal fatigue that will cause an auto to break away from the motor home.

Unfortunately, this happen to my wife and I on our last return trip from the East, last April. In Phoenix, Arizona our MDX Acura broke away from the motor home as we were leaving Interstate 17 off ramp. As we turn, our MDX broke away from the motor home at 8-9 mph and T-bone a light standard and rolled into the desert. We were very fortunate that it happen at that time, as no other vehicles were involved. It could of happen on the freeway or regular highway and hit another vehicle at 60-65 mph causing severe damage, injuries or fatalities.

I have a break away system on the MDX with a regular brake system that operates from the motor home brake system. Neither worked, as the front of the MDX and base plate attached to the unibody tore off from the frame. The front of the MDX was still attached to my motor home.

I have formally contacted by letter, over night delivery, Jim Roach, Vice President of Honda America Corporation on May 16, 2005 with no response as of this date. I have enclosed a copy of that letter. It seems to me, that they have no concern about the safety of the American Public and are only interested in selling automobiles. I have also enclosed

Heath
7/2/05

pictures showing where pieces of the unibody metal is still attached to the front base plate and the MDX front section which in turn is attached to the motor home.

I am only interested in making these vehicles safe for towing and not for any personal gain. I was fortunate that the MDX breakaway happen where it did. It could of been a very disastrous tragedy with fatalities.

My desire is for you to inform the manufactures about reinforcing the anterior portion of their unibody frames. The base plate we used for towing is 5-6 times thicker steel than the unibody.

I thank you, in advance, for anything that you can do to remedy this serious situation. It would only be for all the vehicles that are to be towed behind a motor home on all four wheels. Their manuals states the procedure for how these vehicles are to be towed behind a motor home on all four wheels.

Again our thanks for your attention to this matter.

Grady

Encl: [REDACTED] letter
Pictures

cc: U S Senator Harry Reid
U S Senator John Ensign
U S Congresswoman Shelly Berkley
U S Congressman John Porter

[REDACTED]
Henderson, Nevada [REDACTED]

May 16, 2005

American Honda Motor Company, Inc.
Jim Roach, Vice President
1919 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, California 90501-2746

RE: 2002 MDX
2HNYD18482H [REDACTED]

To Whom It Concerns:

First, let me introduce ourselves to you as customers who have purchased four Acuras over the last seven years from Falconi Acura in Las Vegas, Nevada. Until May 2005, my wife and I were superb advertisement for the Acura vehicle. We also have an MDX, information above, which we tow behind our motorhome.

In your owners manual you outline that we are able to pull the MDX on all four wheels behind a motorhome. Well, this letter is to inform you of a very potential dangerous flaw in your vehicle.

On April 26, 2005, in Phoenix, Arizona, on our return from a long 5,800 mile trip to the East Coast, our MDX broke loose from our motorhome at the unibody frame. I have a breakaway system, plus a brake system on the auto when we are pulling it behind our motorhome. The breakaway system did not function effectively as the complete front of the vehicle came off the MDX. As the enclosed pictures will show, the base plate of our tow system actually tore the THIN metal of your unibody frame. The six large bolts that attach the base plate to the unibody frame were still attached to torn pieces of unibody frame. We were very fortunate that the MDX broke loose and went into the desert. It could of been a very disastrous tragedy with fatalities.

I have pulled that MDX behind two different motorhomes for over 39,000 miles with no problems until last month. I contacted the sales manager, Daryl Suta and service

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manager, Mike Hanna, at Falconi Acura and they were appalled. I was given the Client Relations Department number by them to call. Personally, I think it should be called the "Client Public Deconstruction Department"!

On May 2, 2005, at 8:31 AM, I called your Client Relations Department and talked to a Samantha, who is a supervisor, that answer my call. I told her that I was concerned about the potential problem and what had happen. I was amazed of the inattentiveness to all the details and aspects of a potential problem that you have in regards to this situation. I told her that I would be happy to send her pictures and suggested that Acura send a representative to look at the vehicle. She refused to do that, and told me, "At your expense, you could have the vehicle towed to one of our dealers." I told her there is an Acura dealer within two miles of where the vehicle is located, and she said, "That won't happen!" She then said, "What do you want out of this?" And I said facetiously, "Replace my vehicle!" Her comment was, "That ain't going to happen!" She told me that I can acquire an attorney or have my insurance company contact our legal department. As you know, if there is a manufacturers defect the insurance will not pay for damages.

I had no interest in suing Acura or asking for anything other than some understanding and concern about the safety of the American public in your vehicles. I did contact Blue Ox, the manufacturer of the tow bar that I use, and they were very concern and asked for pictures. Since Acura has no interest in the safety of the American Public and are just interested in selling as many vehicles as possible, this is what I am going to do. I am going to send a story of the accident and pictures to the National Institute of Highway Safety, my US Senators and Representatives, all of the RV trade magazines. Also on all of my many travels across this country and the RV Rallies, I will present a program about the potential problems of the unibody used on all of Honda Autos. I told this to Samantha and her comment was, "Be my guest!!"

This letter is to inform you in writing, of a potential design problem, that you have with these vehicles and your position in regards to it. If, 'God Forbidding' there is a serious accident due to the breaking of the base plate from the unibody frame, that I will be the first in line to offer my services to any potential suit against your Company. I will testify that I have informed your Company of the safety problem, your lack of concern, and the attitude in regards to the safety of the American Public.

It is my recommendation, that on any vehicle that you manufacture, that Honda claims can be towed on all four wheels, that you reinforce the anterior portion of the unibody where the base plate attaches. Also, let me inform you that you lost a very good customer, who has been a good advertisement for your vehicles.

Very truly yours,

Dr. &
JGA/jt

cc: Vince Consul, esq
National Highway Institute
Falconi Acura







