10146424

Mr. Thomas Z. Cooper
Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20590

December 12, 2005

RECEIVED
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OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

RE: NHTSA Action Inquiry

Dear Mr. Cooper:

Please find enclosed a completed Department of Transportation (DOT) Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire to Report Vehicle Safety Defects regarding the safety concerns I (as many others) have on the Chrysler Jeep Grand Cherokee braking system. In your SAE presentation May 14 -16, 2001 to a Government/Industry audience, you listed the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) Mission is to:

1. Identify defects that relate to motor vehicle safety, and
2. To assure that defects are remedied effectively and promptly.

A review of the ODI vehicle owner complaints database maintained by your department on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) website lists 339 total complaints lodged against the 2002 Jeep Grand Cherokee of which 150 complaints (fully 44%) relate to customer safety concerns regarding the vehicle brake system. See Table 1 for a listing of all complaints your office has received on this topic. A similar database review of "Defect Investigations" actually performed by the NHTSA for this vehicle list only two; one involving engine cooling system fan disintegration and one involving the powertrain.

I am familiar with a similar accident database maintained by the US Coast Guard, and even though boat accident reporting is mandatory, they estimate only 10% of actual boating accidents not resulting in fatalities are reflected within their database. As your ODI complaint database is voluntary in nature I would expect your report rate even less than 10% indicating there are a significant number of very dissatisfied customers of these vehicles who believe there are braking safety concerns and have tried to bring this issue to your department's attention.

My question is:

1. It is clearly apparent that the driving public has identified to your office that a brake system defect involving motor vehicle safety is perceived.
2. It appears Chrysler Corporation is also aware of brake problems on this vehicle by its issuance of Technical Service Bulletin (TSB) 05-003-02B dating back to June 10, 2002 to replace the original Teves "open-sided bracket" design calipers to the redesigned Akebono "fully-closed" style calipers.
3. There continue to be numerous complaints to your office regarding the adequacy of even the newly designed Akebono calibers after cars have had their dealer comply with TSB 05-003-02B.

Mario
12/21/05

4. There appears no Defect Investigation has ever been conducted by your office on this important consumer issue.

So what further prodding by the user public is necessary to engage your office to execute on your second corporate mission; "To assure that defects are remedied effectively and promptly"? As brake system complaints were logged by your department as early as January 2002, it is still not clear why your office has not done anything to force Chrysler Corporation to provide a vehicle braking system which does not prematurely warp front brake rotors causing speed dependent steering shimmy which can, in elevated speed conditions, lead to loss of vehicle control. To say nothing of the financial burden the manufacturer has placed upon the vehicle operator who must pay to repair costly components every 10-15K miles. This is clearly an inadequately designed safety related system.

Table 1 – OID Jeep Grand Cherokee Brake Complaint ID Numbers Received by NHTSA

757432	10004971	10033993	10058149	10075047*	10081003	10100029	10114402	10126348
760911	10014113	10036720	10058572	10075054	10081853	10101020	10114978	10128467
767473	10014403*	10037106	10059275	10075389	10082129	10101139	10116286	10128488
768769	10015235*	10037518	10060102	10075953	10082999	10102608	10116754	10128717
769962	10016297	10041554	10060706	10075968	10087701	10109465	10119135	10134775*
8007982	10016876	10046759	10062769	10078778	10087703	10110207	10120128	10137178
8011505	10019967	10050091	10064825	10078953	10088668*	10111108	10121344	10138640
8012619	10020990	10051367	10065722*	10078958	10090060	10112149	10121908	10140498
8018047	10022870	10051412	10070235	10078977	10090808	10112669	10121919	10140707
10003093*	10028758	10052776	10072134	10079802	10091617	10112967	10124968	10140897
10003944*	10032699	10056700	10073247	10080665*	10100020	10113277	10126305	10143341
								10143370

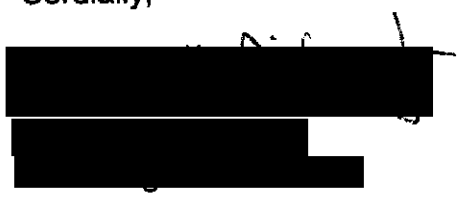
Notes: Complaints 757432 and 10036720 are excellent defect description complaints.
Numbers with (*) are also very good in description.
Also note complaints may be listed multiple times within data base to cover multiple complaint issues.

My brake system complaint parallels the same issues as all the above complaint numbers. Brakes on these vehicles should be designed to last more than 10-15K miles without costly repairs, and should provide uncompromised vehicle control in stops from highway speeds without loss of vehicle control.

Please comment on when your office plans to initiate an investigation on this complaint(s).

Enclosure (1)
Completed Vehicle Owner Questionnaire

Cordially,



[redacted]
Greenwood, Indiana
[redacted]
[redacted]

Form Approved: O.M.B. No. 2127-0008

U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire

TO REPORT VEHICLE SAFETY DEFECTS
888-327-4236
www.safercar.gov

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY	
Date Received	Repository ☐
Reference No.	

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name [redacted]

Street No [redacted] Apt. No.

City GREENWOOD State INDIANA Zip Cod [redacted]

Daytime Telephone Number [redacted]

Evening Telephone Number

E-mail

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? ☑ YES ☐ NO
In the absence of authorization, NHTSA will provide a copy of this report to the vehicle manufacturer only during a defect investigation or when you make a complaint about recall performance on y[redacted]

Signature of Owner [redacted] Date 12/8/05

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification number located at bottom of windshield on driver's side	Make	Model	Year	Current Mileage
1J4GW48S42C[redacted]	JEEP	GRAND CHEROKEE	2002	66750

Date Purchased	Dealer's Name and Telephone Number	Engine:	Fuel Type:
10-22-01	CROSSROADS CHRY-PLYM-JEEP EAGLE (317)783-1371		☐ Diesel ☐ Hybrid
☑ Original Owner	Dealer's City INDIANAPOLIS State INDIANA Zip Code 46217	No. Cylinders 6	☒ Gas ☐ Other

Transmission Type		Powertrain	
☐ Manual	☒ Antilock Brakes	☐ All-Wheel Drive	☐ Rear-Wheel Drive
☒ Automatic	☒ Cruise Control	☐ Front-Wheel Drive	☒ Four-Wheel Drive

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Component Name	Incident Date(s)	Failure Mileage	Failure Speed	Failure Location
SERVICE BRAKES, COMPONENTS: DISC: ROTOR	9/16/02, 4/21/04, 12/8/04	15514, 37953, 46345	45+MPH	☐ Driver ☐ Passenger ☒ Front ☐ Rear

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make/Brand	Tire Model/Line	Tire Name	Tire Size (Example: P215/65R1105)
NONE			

Failed Structure ☐ Tread ☐ Sidewall ☐ Bead

DOT No. (Example: DOT MAL9ABC036 on sidewall)

☐ Original Equipment ☐ Prior Repair

Failure Type: ☐ Blowout ☐ Blister ☐ Crack ☐ Torn ☐ Tread Separation ☐ Road Hazard ☐ Out of Round

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make	Date Manufactured	Model Number and Name
NONE		

Seat Type ☐ Infant ☐ Booster ☐ Integrated ☐ Convertible ☐ Other

Failed Part. Describe Failure Below ☐ Base ☐ Harness/Buckle ☐ LATCH Connecter ☐ Shell ☐ Handle ☐ Other

Installed in Vehicle using the: ☐ Vehicle safety belt ☐ LATCH system* **Vehicle info required*

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).)

Crash	Fire	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Deaths	Police Report No.
☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No			

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).

SEE LETTER ATTACHED TO MR. THOMAS Z. COOPER, OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION DATED 12/12/05 AND ODI COMPLAINTS 757432 AND 10036720 WHICH SIMILARLY DESCRIBE THE COMPLAINTS COVERED BY THIS VEHICLE SAFETY DEFECT REPORT.

Continue on back.

The Privacy Act of 1974 - Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to a49 U.S.C. Chapter 301. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If NHTSA proceeds with administration enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Mail postage free or fax to 202-366-7882