

MAY 11 2006

The Honorable George Voinovich
United States Senator
37 West Broad Street, Suite 300
Columbus, OH 43215

NVS-216aac
Ref # 10156276

Dear Senator Voinovich:

Thank you for your correspondence dated March 15 on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wrote concerning his model-year (MY) 2001 Chevrolet Venture and his wife's MY 2001 Chevrolet Malibu vehicle.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain serious safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect may exist. We cannot act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

We appreciate the report you provided on behalf of [REDACTED]. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. Each report is analyzed and entered into a database to help us determine whether an investigation into a possible safety defect is warranted.

Based on an evaluation of the complaints received by NHTSA and our analysis of the failure mode of engine head gaskets, the agency has determined that this type failure is not related to motor vehicle safety within the meaning of our authorizing statute. The agency has no jurisdiction over non-safety defects, warranty, and remuneration matters. If [REDACTED] has not done so, he may consider contacting his local Consumer Protection Agency, Better Business Bureau, or the Ohio Office of the Attorney General regarding his problems.

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Additionally, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has jurisdiction over non-safety defects, paint, fraud or deception, warranty and dealership problems, remuneration matters, and fair trade practices. There are three ways to contact the FTC: by toll free telephone at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); by mail at Federal Trade Commission, CRC-240, Washington, DC 20580; and by using the Internet complaint form at <http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/complaint.htm>.

An identical letter has been sent to Senator Mike DeWine. I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact me or Mr. Ronald L. Medford, Senior Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety, at (202) 366-1810.

Sincerely yours,

Original Signed By

Michael W. Harrington
Director of External Affairs

cc: Washington Office

NHTSA: NVS-210: Congressional Response

NVS-216: aalonso ext: 6-6903

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cc:

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