

Belleair Beach, FL
April 21, 2006

2006 MAY -4 AM 7: 23

NHTSA
U.S. Dept. of Transportation
400 Seventh St. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590
Re: NVS-211sc
DP05-007

Dear [REDACTED]

In response to my petition requesting that the NHTSA conduct a defect investigation into the electrical system shut down in MY 2000 Mercedes Benz E430 vehicles, I have to tell you that I am deeply disappointed to find out that the petition was denied. Unbeknownst to me, there were numerous complaints of either the vehicle stalling or shut down due to liquid spillage onto the transmission shifter (center console) area. I was unaware of this until receiving your letter where those numbers were identified. Fortunately for all of us drivers involved, there were no accidents, and thankfully no deaths relating to this problem. Obviously, as we are both aware, Mercedes Benz has admitted to and "improved" the shifter by encasing it in a leather piece that completely covers the shifter and does not allow for anything to spill or drop into the open area. The older models have NEVER been recalled to "improve" these "touch-shifters". What sort of investigation was ODI involved in or did they conclude that the response by Mercedes Benz was enough to close the inquiry in February 2002? It was stated in your letter that more complaints were received after the inquiry was closed and I suppose because no crashes or injuries resulted, there was no cause for alarm. I did state, as you reiterated in the letter, that I was able to operate the vehicle to a place out of harm's way. Perhaps if you or someone on this petition board

Steve Chuan
5/4/06

were sitting in the passenger seat, you would not have calmly stated that as such! You also state that I provided no evidence of a safety-related defect. Must there be an injury or death before a decision is made that warrants an investigation? Obviously, with no deaths involved, this was not a priority. If your agency has a safety mission to accomplish, I am sure there is a way to deal with your "limited resources". Please don't let someone who is unaware of this problem die before your agency decides that this is a matter that should have been resolved at a prior date.

Sincerely,

A large rectangular area of the document has been completely blacked out, redacting the signature and any text that might have been present below the signature line.

CC: Mr. Steve Chan