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May 18, 2006

Butler, PA

Ford Motor Company
Customer Service
The American Road
Dearborn, MI 48121

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Dear Customer Service,

I rarely write letters to express my dissatisfaction, but being a loyal Ford owner since the mid-seventies, I feel I must express my unhappiness regarding a recent service visit to my local Ford dealer, Butler County Ford, Butler, PA.

I own a 2003 Ford Explorer with a V-8 engine. All of my previous problems with this vehicle were covered under the new vehicle warranty, including replacing the rear end and multiple climate control problems. These problems led to a low confidence level in this vehicle, so I purchased the premium extended warranty prior to the new vehicle warranty expiring.

On previous visits for oil changes, state mandated safety inspections and the problems noted above, I mentioned a problem I periodically experienced with stalling and/or engine surging, both when driving and when coming to a stop. I was always told I had to leave the vehicle overnight so they could replicate the problem. Since this was a very infrequent problem, and there was no common element, i.e., cold engine, weather, etc that could instigate the problem, I felt leaving the vehicle overnight would only result a "Could not duplicate the problem" diagnosis. But as the problems became more frequent, I felt it was possibly becoming a safety issue. So I mentioned it again the morning I took the vehicle in for my annual state mandated safety inspection and I was told there was a service bulletin regarding this problem. They explained the PCM needed reprogramming to correct the idle. I told them to go ahead and reprogram it as necessary, fully expecting this to be covered under warranty. To my surprise this wasn't covered under the extended warranty since no parts were required. I can read as well as anyone, and that's what the warranty literature says. But since I didn't mess with the programming, I can only assume there was an inherent problem with the PCM since new, and since I have always had a warranty, either original 3/36 or the extended "Premium Care" warranty, I expected this re-programming to be covered. To my surprise it was not, leaving me with a bill for \$80.95. I'm thinking I shouldn't have even had it fixed. I had learned to be extra cautious at stop signs and lights, and to quickly shift to neutral to restart the engine when it stalled while driving. I could have left it that way for the next owner, but that wouldn't have been morally right.

So, that's my complaint. Please understand, I have no complaints against Butler County Ford. They have been excellent to deal with, straight up with the facts involving this complaint, and overall a pleasure to deal with. But I think this problem was inherent since new, and I'm stuck paying for it. Eighty bucks may not be much, but I'm currently retired, on a fixed income, and don't have the extra money to throw around. I would very much like you to consider reimbursing me for this expense, although I can't really say I expect it. I'll be replacing the Explorer with a more fuel efficient vehicle just as soon as economically practical, and would like to consider another Ford, but this experience has not left me with good feelings to future Ford ownership. That said, I'd like to share the following with you.

I've owned a lot of Ford vehicles, including a 1978 F150, 1979 Mercury Bobcat wagon, 1982 Escort 4-door, 1983 Mercury Cougar, 1983 Ford Country Squire, 1986 Mustang, 1988 Thunderbird, 1990 Ford Taurus Wagon, 1993 Ranger, 1998 Mercury Mountaineer, and my

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current Explorer. My non-Ford vehicles have actually been Ford products, a 1997 Jaguar XK8 coupe, and a two Mazdas. I worked for Ford for almost 15 years, both in marketing and with Ford Motor Credit. So you see I have a long personal history with Ford and Ford products. But as I grow older, my next vehicle must give me a strong feeling of confidence that future mechanical problems will be under warranty. There are some manufacturers now offering much longer warranties that any of the domestic manufacturers come close to matching. Example: Hyundai. I can't get a similarly contented Fusion for anywhere close to the price of a Sonata, and it comes with a five year, 60,000 mile bumper to bumper warranty. And it's ranked considerably higher in quality and customer satisfaction

Today's experience leads me to believe I can expect to have higher than anticipated expenses going forward with my Explorer. I tried to mitigate future expenses with the extended warranty, but am now thinking that may have been unwise. I can only hope that future problems involve replacing a part, so that I have a chance of it being covered.

Thank you for allowing me to vent my displeasure. I hope someone takes the steps needed to bring Ford out of the past, into the present and prepared for the future.

Very truly yours,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

cc: Butler County Ford
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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