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San Diego, CA  
17 August 2006

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Washington, D.C. 20590

To whom it may concern:

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter I sent to Nissan North America. This letter details an incident I had with the seatbelt in my 2005 Nissan Titan.

Thank you,

*M. Merri*  
8/30/06

[REDACTED]  
San Diego, CA [REDACTED]

17 August 2006

Nissan North America, Inc.  
Consumer Affairs Dept.  
P.O. Box 191  
Gardena. CA 90248-0191

To whom it may concern:

I am the owner of a 2005 Nissan Titan, VIN # 1N6AA07A75N [REDACTED] This truck was purchased new in March of 2005 from Mossy Nissan in San Diego.

I recently completed an 8 day 2550 mile road trip with my family in this Titan. The most vivid and haunting memory I will have of this trip will be my 11 year old daughter becoming entangled in her seat belt. Somehow she wrapped the rear seat belt around herself. When we stopped for the night she unclipped her seat belt which retracted pulling out all of the slack. At this point she realized the seat belt was wrapped around her waist and she was trapped. I went to help her thinking it would be a simple matter. Normally I am able to allow a seat belt to take in a bit of slack which then allows you to pull it back out. In subsequently reading the owners manual I now realize this seat belt had been inadvertently placed into the automatic locking mode. As you know this requires you to retract the seat belt almost all the way prior to being able to pull it back out. Not realizing this at the time I tried twice to reset the seat belt only to tighten the noose around my little girl's waist. I then tried to lift her through the noose only to have it

tighten further. I pulled on the seat belt seeking to have it release my baby to no avail. I'll never forget the vision of my little girl both hands grasping and pulling down on the seat belt crying she couldn't breath. Fortunately I remembered packing a folding utility knife for this trip. After a frantic search I located this knife and cut the seatbelt to free my daughter. My traumatized and terrorized daughter cried uncontrollably for at least 10 minuets.

I, my wife, daughter and son were all shaken and frightened by this episode. I am haunted and most concerned as to the potential for trauma, terror and ultimate tragedy associated with this seatbelt system. **It is far too easy for these seatbelts to be inadvertently put into this automatic locking mode.** My children tell me this happens all the time. They say "It starts making that ratcheting sound and they need to release it all the way." Children on trips can not be expected to sit still they will wiggle and pull on their seatbelts. I expect wrapping the belt around you as my daughter did to be a rare event none the less it happened with traumatic results.

I think there should be some education and warnings about this automatic locking mode, not something buried in these huge owners manuals. It would also be advisable to have a way to simply release a seatbelt when this occurs.

The good folks at Mossy Nissan have ordered me a new seat belt and volunteered to replace it as a warrantee item.

I am writing this letter to make sure you are aware of this situation and hopefully be able to find a correction.

Thank you,

