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Volkswagen of America
Customer Relations
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Rochester Hills, MI 48309

2006 SEP 2 15

Volkswagen of America, Inc.
Customer Services Department
888 West Big Beaver
P.O. Box 3951
Troy, MI 48007-3951

RE: SAFETY ISSUES FOR VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT 1999, VIN #: WWWMA63 [REDACTED]

Dear Volkswagen:

I own a 1999 Volkswagen Passat and am the original owner. The car has 45,000 miles on it and has never been in an accident. At its 40,000-mile check-up at Metro Volkswagen in Irving, TX earlier this year, I was told that the tie rods and the driver's air bag were bad. (I was given nothing in writing from Metro's service department regarding either of these problems; I was told of the problems over the phone. See attachment 1.)

Subsequently, I talked to the Metro service manager, Tim Kimber, since the airbag light was on and I was not told about an airbag problem. He told me that neither problem – the tie rods or the airbag – should be present in a car with only 40,000 miles. These issues were the result of manufacturing defects. He also said that he would back up my request to have Volkswagen pay for the repairs since both are safety issues.

I called Volkswagen of America about the problems and they said that my car was no longer under warranty and they would not pay anything for the repairs.

Finally, I took the car to an independent auto mechanic to have the abovementioned issues repaired. (After the 40,000-mile check-up, I lost confidence in Metro's service department, but that is another story.) He confirmed that these issues were the result of manufacturing defects and should be recalled or, at least, fixed by Volkswagen at no charge. Furthermore, the independent mechanic said that I should write Public Citizen about the airbag because this issue was caused by a manufacturing defect and was a safety issue. (By the way, he could not repair the airbag so the airbag light is still on.)

Today, I went on the Internet to see if other people had had similar problems with 1999 Passats. To my surprise, I found out that 1999 Passats were recalled for tie rod issues in 1999 and notification went out to owners in Oct., 1999 – before I bought my car in November, 1999. (NHTSA Recall No. 99V248/VWoA Recall No. UL/Audi Recall No. KW – See Attachment 2.)

In other words, Volkswagen was aware of a tie rod problem at the time I bought the car and should have repaired it years ago – before I bought the car or, at the very least, during one of its earlier scheduled maintenance visits at Metro Volkswagen. (Metro is the only dealer I used.)

Moreover, on the Internet, I found several consumer sites discussed the airbag warning light on this Passat model – it seems to be a common problem.

Actually, I still don't know if the airbag light or the airbag is the problem since it still is not fixed. The airbag light was on when I took the car in for its 40,000-mile scheduled maintenance visit. However, I had to call Metro's service department after the visit and asked why the airbag light was still on. Was there a problem? They said, "Maybe. We'll have to check it out." I said, "I paid you to check it as part of the 40,000 mile maintenance. It is listed as completed on my receipt."

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Then they went on to tell me about all of the great information they got from hooking my car up to the computer, etc. But, as far as I am concerned, I was ripped off. Metro didn't give me any information in writing about the problems I paid them to check. Furthermore, after several phone calls to the service manager, I still do not have the information in writing. (I have attached the receipt and information I was given.)

Bottom line, I want Volkswagen to repair the airbag light or the airbag – whichever it is – because it is a safety issue and a manufacturing defect. Furthermore, I would like them to reimburse me for the tie rods that should have been fixed years ago when they were recalled and the car was under warranty. My mechanic spent four hours on the repair but didn't give me a breakout on the cost. However, if I need to, I can get one.

Please let me know how you plan to rectify these consumer safety issues.

Sincerely,

Irving, TX

cc.

Public Citizen
1600 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 588-1000

DOT Auto Safety Hotline
Office of Defects
Investigation
400 7th St., SW
Washington, DC 20590

National Institute for
Automotive Service
Excellence (ASE)
101 Blue Seal Dr. SE, Ste. 101
Leesburg, VA 20175

Council of Better Business
Bureaus, Inc.
4200 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 800
Arlington, VA 22203-1838

National Automobile Dealers
Association
AUTOCAP
8400 Westpark Dr.
McLean, VA 22102

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