

NOV 30 2006

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator
508 Hampton Street, Suite 202
Columbia, SC 29201

NVS-216 aae
Ref. # 10173275

Dear Senator Graham:

Thank you for your correspondence dated October 30 on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] wrote concerning her model year (MY) 2000 Dodge Stratus vehicle. Your correspondence was received on November 2.

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] and her previous correspondence to NHTSA on October 3. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us.

Federal regulations require a manufacturer conducting a safety recall of motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment to reimburse owners who have paid to obtain a remedy for the problem within a reasonable time, which in many instances is one year, prior to the manufacturer's notification. However, in this case, [REDACTED] elected not to have the high pressure steering hose replaced prior to the recall related to that component. Accordingly, she did not incur a repair expense for which she may have been reimbursed under the laws NHTSA administers. Instead she apparently believes the manufacturer should pay for other expenses such as the cost to repair or replace her vehicle after it was damaged by fire. NHTSA has no authority to address that issue. We can only suggest that [REDACTED] pursue the matter through her auto insurance company or the South Carolina State Office of the Attorney General.

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I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please 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: Ms. Alonso ext: 6-6903

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cc:

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