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Fulton, IL [REDACTED]
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DaimlerChrysler Motors Corp.
Customer Center
PO Box 21-8004
Auburn Hills, MI 48321-8004

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter with great concern for the safety of motorists on the road with your poorly designed Dodge Ram Trucks.

I purchased a 2004 Dodge Ram 2500 diesel truck at Ron Buysse Dodge in Davenport, IA. I told the sales man that I intended on towing it behind my motor home. I spoke with a number of salespeople about this, as I wanted to be sure of exactly how to tow this truck. The salesperson made copies of the pages in the manual on how to prepare the vehicle to tow and how to make it ready to drive once we are done towing.

I purchased a 10,000 pound rated Blue Ox tow bar and the recommended Blue Ox truck attachment bar to go with this specific tow bar.

I just returned from the first trip towing the truck in which we traveled to San Diego, CA. We had traveled a little over 2400 miles towing the truck. Only by God's grace did I happen to notice the bumper on the truck did not look right as we were driving it around San Diego. I looked under the truck at the bumper assembly and to my surprise and horror the bumper was very loose.

I saw that the bumper assembly was only attached to the frame with (4) 7/16 bolts. These were all that held the assembly to the frame with only 1/8" or less metal slotted brackets. The jarring movement of towing had allowed movement of these brackets at the point of contact with the frame and over this relatively short 2400 mile trip had wolkered (enlarged) the holes that the bolts went through. Two of the holes had become the size of quarters; the other two were also enlarged.

My wife and I became frightful of what might have happened if, as we had planned, we hooked up the next day and took off for our return trip. It is almost a sure bet that the truck would have broken loose from the bumper assembly, which by design is the ONLY attachment to the tow bar as the safety chains also are only attached to the bumper assembly. The truck breaking loose on the interstate at 55 mph equates to an accident and probably deaths to the motorist near us.

This was a Sunday that I discovered the problem. We had to stay an additional day, locate a welder that we could get references for, and after over six hours with my assisting him, the assembly was attached with enough strength to withstand towing. I can not believe with the resources Dodge has, the supposedly talented R & D people on staff, this near miss almost happened. Did anyone check the towing of a 6,000 lb truck with less than a 1/8" metal attachment to the frame? As you have specific directions on how to set the vehicle to free wheel for towing and how to change back to drive after towing, this vehicle was suppose to be designed to tow. Your sales people state that it is designed to be towed, everything seems to say it is ok to tow this vehicle except the design.

We incurred costs, time and stress that should not have happened. My wife was fearful the entire return trip and I check under the truck at every stop. As a retired mechanic, I am upset and disappointed that Dodge would put the "bottom line" before the safety of millions of people. How many trucks are on the road behind Motor homes? How many accidents are waiting to happen? I would like and expect a response to this concern and my letter.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

2004 Dodge Ram 2500 Diesel Owner

VIN: 3D7KU28C94G [REDACTED]

Purch. Date: Sept 30, 2004

Cc: NHTSA
US Dept. of Transportation
Washington, DC 20590