



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

January 16, 2008

The Honorable Henry E. Brown, Jr.
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
5900 Core Avenue, Suite 401
North Charlestown, SC 29406

NVS-216 mec
Ref. No. 10208314

Dear Congressman Brown:

Thank you for your correspondence dated October 17, 2007, on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wrote concerning the problems she encountered with her model year (MY) 2002 Ford Explorer vehicle.

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.

We appreciate the report you provided on behalf [REDACTED] and the previous reports she provided while visiting NHTSA's Internet web site. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. Each report is analyzed and entered into a database to help us determine whether an investigation into a possible safety defect is warranted.

Information submitted by vehicle owners using Vehicle Owner's Questionnaires is automatically entered into our complaint database. The data are then reviewed and analyzed by NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation investigators to determine whether an investigation is warranted. Due to the volume of consumer complaints (about 40,000 a year) received and limited agency resources, NHTSA cannot respond to the submitters of these questionnaires. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused [REDACTED].

We have reviewed our database, including those items referred to by [REDACTED], in an effort to identify whether a safety defect trend exists with regard to problems associated with gear shift lever breaking in MY 2002 Ford Explorer vehicles. Although we are not opening a safety defect investigation at this time, we continually review all available data to determine whether an investigation may be warranted. The information you provided has been entered into our database and will be considered with other reports to identify any safety defect trends that may require our attention.



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We sympathize with [REDACTED] concerning her request for reimbursement; however, this type of request does not fall under our jurisdiction. [REDACTED] indicates that she has contacted the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs about this matter. We recommend that she continue to pursue that course.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Ronald L. Medford, Senior Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety, at (202) 366-9700.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm R N', is written over the typed name.

Nicole R. Nason

cc: Washington Office