



State of Wisconsin
Jim Doyle, Governor

CL-10227336-4741

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary

2008 MAY -6 AM 7:43

April 29, 2008

[REDACTED]

EVANSVILLE WI [REDACTED]

RE: File [REDACTED] (Refer to this number when contacting our agency)
AMERICAN SUZUKI MOTOR CORP
3251 E IMPERIAL HWY
BREA CA 92821

Dear [REDACTED]:

Thank you for contacting the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection concerning American Suzuki Motor Corp.

The issues in your complaint may be within the authority of the agencies listed below, so we are forwarding your complaint directly to them:

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DEALER REGULATION UNIT
4802 SHEBOYGAN AVE RM 201
PO BOX 7909
MADISON WI 53707-7909

Telephone: 608 266-1425

✓ NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
400 7TH ST SW
WASHINGTON DC 20950

Telephone: 800 424-9393 or 202 366-0123
Website: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Agriculture generates \$51.5 billion for Wisconsin

2811 Agriculture Drive • PO Box 8911 • Madison, WI 53708-8911 • Wisconsin.gov

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April 30, 2008
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If you have additional information or wish to follow-up on your complaint, please contact them at the telephone number or address listed above.

Sincerely,



Shelby Fritz
Consumer Information Specialist
BUREAU OF CONSUMER PROTECTION
FAX: 608-224-4939
E-mail: Shelby.Fritz@wisconsin.gov

WDATCP

[REDACTED]
Evansville, Wisconsin [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

APR 24 2008

Division of Trade &
Consumer Protection
Madison WI

April 21, 2008

Chairman Osamu Suzuki
President Hiroshi Tsuda
American Suzuki Motor Corporation
Mr. Ralph Nader [via e-mail]
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
Attorney General John B. Van Hollen
Ms. Kelly Anderson [via e-mail]
Kayser Automotive Group
Anderson Mazda Nissan Suzuki

Re: 2004 Suzuki Verona
VIN: KL5VM52L84B [REDACTED]

Hello.

I purchased a 2004 Suzuki Verona in March 2005. The car had 390 actual miles on it. An incredibly stylish, black, four-door sedan, with heated leather seats and all the bells and whistles; I absolutely loved it. Having never heard of the Suzuki Verona prior to walking onto the dealer's lot, I put my faith in the Suzuki name for quality and reliability. I am a single woman; I can only afford one car; I drive a lot of miles every year; more than anything, I need a reliable car.

I continued to love my car ... for the first year. The summer of 2006, I started loving my car a little less. You see, occasionally on hot, humid days -- but only occasionally on hot, humid days -- the car would "act up." I would drive to work in the morning, enjoying the open sunroof, listening to the radio, nary a care in the world. I would park the car, go to work, leave work, and get about five, six miles into my 30-plus-mile journey home, at which point I typically hit stop-start traffic. At that point, the car would begin to, what I have come to call, "lull-and-jolt."

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The "lull-and-jolt" is where I'm stopped or moving slowly at a traffic light or in heavy traffic; I push on the gas pedal, and there is about a three-second lag when nothing happens. The car is running, the gas pedal is depressed; there simply is no connection between the two. That's the "lull" part. After that three-or-so seconds, the car lurches forward because the gas pedal is depressed and the engine now suddenly registers that action. That's the "jolt" part.

I would lull-and-jolt my way through traffic -- oh, did I mention only occasionally on hot, humid days when I was either nowhere near the dealership or the dealership was closed? -- till the "check engine" light came on, and the car would run fine again. When I did get ahold of the dealership, I was told to come in the next morning for a diagnostic.

The following morning, there would be no check-engine light. The person at the dealership would say not to bring the car in because there was nothing to diagnose. I dismissed it as maybe some water in the gas tank. It was unbearably hot and humid, after all. I bought Heet and kept the gas tank above midline. Problem solved ... or so I thought. It happened maybe two or three times that summer, but it always reset overnight. I just thought I would have to be sure to keep the gas tank topped off during hot, humid weather; a quirk I was willing to live with.

In October 2006, the ABS light came on. In March 2007, a new ABS module was finally delivered. I drove an entire Wisconsin winter without ABS. Now, I think a Wisconsin winter is just the kind of thing that makes ABS worthwhile. There were several times that winter I remember thinking ABS would have been really beneficial.

Spring came and Wisconsin started heating up. I had almost forgotten about the lull-and-jolt ... till it started happening with more frequency and severity and in a wider variety of circumstances. It was not only happening at lower speeds in heavy traffic, it was sputtering and kicking at highway speeds, too. I would drive it to the dealership, or have it towed; it would be kept a few days, sometimes weeks; it would be "fixed" and returned to me. It would happen again. I would drive it to the dealership, or have it towed; it would be kept a few days, sometimes weeks; it would be "fixed" and returned to me. It would happen again ...

Each time the car was "fixed," I loved it less, growing instead more suspicious. I no longer enjoyed the radio; I was concentrating on engine noises and the dials on my dashboard. Try as I might, I found no discernible pattern other than heat and humidity. Then again,

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heat and humidity didn't ensure it was going to lull-and-jolt. I could drive one, two, three days in hot, humid weather without incident. It was a hit-and-miss proposition.

Do you know how wearing it is to get in your car every day and wonder: Will it happen again today? Will somebody rear-end me in traffic? Will I make it home tonight or will the car die and leave me stranded altogether? I even started taking the back roads home. Less traffic, less traffic lights, less chance of getting rear-ended; a greater chance of getting stranded in the middle of nowhere; but I was willing to risk that over an accident.

And so it went till that fateful day when my remaining bit of love for my car was replaced by fear of my car ... I was driving down the freeway between Madison and Janesville. The freeway crosses the Rock River. After the bridge, the road rises quite steeply for a good distance. I had the cruise control set; the car was just out of the shop; I was driving in air-conditioned comfort on my way to get a haircut.

I began the ascent on the other side of the Rock River, and suddenly the car started dropping speed like I was dragging an anchor. The engine was running; there was simply no connection between the running engine and the gas pedal. None whatsoever. Because I was traveling up a steep incline, my speed dropped that much more quickly. Because I had the cruise control set, the gas pedal lodged into the floorboard trying to maintain cruising speed.

It took very few seconds for my car to drop to less than 40 mph. I watched the semi behind me grow ever closer while I desperately tried to dislodge the gas pedal. I hit the brake to cancel the cruise control and swerved onto the shoulder of the road. Only because I darted right and the semi made a large lunge into the left lane did he avoid driving up and over the back of my car. It is one thing to be afraid of being rear-ended at a traffic light; it is an entirely different thing to see the grille of a semi looming in the rearview mirror at freeway speed when you have no control over your vehicle.

After I composed myself, I had the car towed to the dealership where a transmission, head gaskets, and many other new engine parts were installed. It was the last time that dealership would "fix" my car because it was closing. I was passed along to the next closest Suzuki dealership -- across the border in Illinois. I didn't think that would be such a big deal. I had lots of new parts. Certainly it should be fixed for real this time, right?

Um, no, not at all ...

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In desperation I called Suzuki USA to talk to someone to try to get some help. I was connected with a very polite gentleman who told me that Suzuki is not at all aware of this problem. I might have believed him were it not for the fact I found an Edmunds CarSpace website, Suzuki Verona forum, wherein other Verona owners report the same problems. Some have had engines replaced multiple times; others, the ABS and check-engine lights come on repeatedly; others had their cars taken back under Lemon Law. Here's the address. I encourage you to peruse the postings yourself:
<http://townhall-talk.edmunds.com/WebX/.f0d0e38/>

Yes, there are over 1,700 posts in that forum; no, not all of them are complaints. Keep reading. You will see I am not alone in my plight. I found it a very disheartening read.

But anyway, my saga continues . . . After speaking with Suzuki USA, the car went back to the dealership. This time, a Suzuki regional manager, or someone of equal stature, came to look at my car to troubleshoot solutions. The solution was to replace my fuel filter. Yes, A FUEL FILTER. The transmission, head gaskets, PCV, fuel pressure regulator, catalytic converters, O2 sensors, all replaced; and the Suzuki representative says my problems stem from a fuel filter gone awry. The dealership installed the fuel filter and called me immediately thereafter to tell me I was getting a new fuel pump, too.

It was raining lightly when I picked up the car. I didn't even make it home before the lull-and-jolt again reared its ugly head; thus, I got a new throttle body shortly after the fuel pump.

Now, while all this is going on -- all the repairs, the inconvenience of having the car repeatedly towed, imposing on friends and family for rides when loaner cars were unavailable and/or for rides to and from the dealership, driving loaner cars for weeks on end -- summer is waning. I finally got my car back when there were no more hot, humid days left. I went through another Wisconsin winter without incident. I had almost begun to believe the car was truly fixed. All hope was lost last week ...

It started raining last Tuesday. I started off to work in the morning; by the time I got to work, the check-engine light was on. It stayed on for three days. I have no idea what caused it to shut off. Driving home last week in the rain, yes, you guessed it: lull-and-jolt. The next day the check-engine light was on, but there was no lull-and-jolt. Apparently it does not need to be both hot and humid anymore. Moisture, though, that seems to be the constant throughout. If only I lived in an arid climate where it never rains. But I don't. Who does?

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But if it no longer needs to be both hot and humid, the lull-and-jolt truly can, AND WILL, happen at any time. To me, that's a very scary proposition.

What am I going to do? I think it has become painfully obvious that there is something inherently wrong with this car that cannot be fixed. What can I do? I can't, in good conscience, sell this car to anyone else, nor relieve my guilt by trading it in and letting someone else sell it at auction. I can't keep paying for it and let it sit in my driveway while I take on another car payment, that I can't afford, for a car that is reliable. The way I see it, I'm stuck with this car. I should not be stuck with a car that scares me.

And that infuriates me even more. I do not understand how, ethically or legally, Suzuki can keep a car like this on the road. I certainly do not feel safe driving it. I am stuck driving it because I have no alternative. It is not just an inconvenience and an irritant. This is a safety issue. Suzuki cannot just keep throwing parts at it willy-nilly, temporarily masking the problem, till the warranty expires, sticking me with the repair bills thereafter. How many unsuccessful attempts to fix this car will it take before someone, besides me, recognizes the futility of the endeavor?

I am at the end of my rope, with no idea what to do now that I'm here. All I know is that I cannot face the prospect of another summer in this car. In my mind, if Suzuki cannot fix this car, then Suzuki should buy it back.

And I stress that my ire is aimed squarely at Suzuki Motor Corporation. I do not fault the dealerships at all. The service representatives have treated me extraordinarily well, and I believe they have sincerely tried to fix my car. Two dealerships have not been able to fix my car; therefore, I believe Suzuki Motor Corporation needs to take responsibility for putting its name on an inferior, unsafe product and take steps to rectify the situation.

I thank you very much for your time. Believe me, I never wanted to bother you with my tale of woe. I just don't know what to do anymore, except to ask that you please, please help me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

