

CL-10235010-4623

To:

General Motors Corporation and its Affiliates		2008 JUL 17 AM 10:55
CEO G. Richard Wagoner Jr. General Motors Corporation 300 Renaissance Center Detroit, MI 48265	Gallagher Buick/Pontiac/GMC PO Box 1448 325 Columbus Blvd. New Britain, CT 06051	2008 JUL 17 AM 11:11

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	
NHTSA Headquarters 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE West Building Washington, DC 20590	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 400 7th Street SW Washington, DC 20590

The State of Connecticut Governing Agencies	
Governor's Highway Safety Office Department of Transportation Bureau of Policy and Planning P.O.Box 317546 2800 Berlin Turnpike Newington, CT 06131-7546	Office of the Connecticut Attorney General 55 Elm Street Hartford, CT 06106

The Better Business Bureau	
The Council of Better Business Bureaus 4200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 800 Arlington, VA 22203-1838	The Better Business Bureau, Inc. 94 South Turnpike Road Wallingford, CT 06492

From:

[REDACTED]

Cromwell, CT [REDACTED]

(h)

(m)

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to explain my frustration and disappointment with the General Motors Corporation in the matter of a reimbursement for repairs made on a recall issue. Below is a brief and factual synopsis of the issue.

In July/August of 2002, my vehicle, a 1998 Pontiac Grand Prix SE (VIN 1G2WJ52MXWF [REDACTED]) began experiencing an odd but very dangerous problem. I would experience difficulty in turning left (and only left). Initially it seemed as if there was no power assist in turning left, then the problem progressed to a limitation in the degree of turning and eventually the vehicle would not turn left at all (literally the wheel would not turn). The only remedy for this was to turn the wheel all the way to the right, then back. This would "fix" the left turn issue temporarily; after a few left turns the issue

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would return, thus starting the "cycle" all over again. I was fortunate in that I noticed the problem and discovered a temporary remedy, otherwise I might have been involved in a serious accident if I had needed to turn left in an emergency.

Knowing that this issue was likely a large repair, I decided to take the vehicle directly to a dealer (rather than a local shop). Upon dropping the car off at Gallagher Buick/Pontiac/GMC in New Britain, CT (the closest dealer at the time), I was notified that "the steering rack [was] binding", which warranted a complete replacement; a nearly \$1,200 repair. A student at the time, I did not have the money for a new vehicle and instead opted to repair the Pontiac. The repair was made and the issue resolved. For convenience, I have attached the repair bill which also describes the issue I was having with the vehicle.

In April of 2008 I was browsing the NHTSA website looking for recalls on another vehicle when I discovered that not a few months after I paid to have my vehicle repaired, a recall was issued on "1998 Pontiac Grand Prix" for "Component: STEERING:RACK AND PINION". Below is text from the NHTSA site (capitalization preserved), relevant portions highlighted:

Make : PONTIAC **Model :** GRAND PRIX **Year :** 1998
Manufacturer : GENERAL MOTORS CORP. **Mfr's Report Date :** NOV 01, 2002
NHTSA CAMPAIGN ID Number : 02V286000 EA02003
NHTSA Action Number: EA02003
Component: STEERING:RACK AND PINION
Potential Number Of Units Affected : 1159156

Summary:

CERTAIN PASSENGER VEHICLES AND MINI VANS HAVE LOWER PINION BEARINGS IN THE POWER RACK AND PINION ASSEMBLY IN WHICH THE RETAINER TABS WERE NOT CRIMPED PROPERLY. THESE AND SOME OTHER RETAINERS USED IN VEHICLES ASSEMBLED BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 1996 AND OCTOBER 31, 1997, COULD FAIL AND PERMIT THE BALL BEARINGS TO ESCAPE.

Consequence:

IF THIS OCCURS, THE PINION SHAFT CAN BE FORCED UPWARD DURING LEFT TURNS AND BACK DOWN AS THE STEERING WHEEL IS MOVED BACK AND TO THE RIGHT. IF THE PINION SHAFT MOVES FURTHER, THE DRIVER WILL NEED TO EXERT MORE EFFORT TO TURN THE STEERING WHEEL, SIMILAR TO A VEHICLE WITHOUT POWER ASSISTED STEERING. IF THE PINION SHAFT MOVES EVEN FURTHER, THE DRIVER WILL REQUIRE MUCH HIGHER EFFORT TO TURN LEFT AND MAY NOT BE ABLE TO TURN THE WHEEL AS MUCH AS INTENDED. WITH THE MAXIMUM PINION SHAFT MOVEMENT, WHICH REQUIRES INTERNAL GEAR COMPONENT DAMAGE, THE DRIVER CAN ENCOUNTER HIGH RESISTANCE TO TURNING LEFT, FOLLOWED BY UNINTENDED POWER ASSIST TO THE RIGHT. IN ANY OF THESE CONDITIONS, A CRASH COULD OCCUR.

Remedy:

DEALERS WILL INSTALL A NEW LOWER PINION BEARING UNLESS INSPECT OF THE EXISTING BEARING INDICATES THAT REPLACEMENT OF THE GEAR ASSEMBLY IS NECESSARY. OWNER NOTIFICATION BEGAN JANUARY 24, 2003. OWNERS WHO TAKE THEIR VEHICLES TO AN AUTHORIZED DEALER ON AN AGREED UPON SERVICE DATE AND DO NOT RECEIVE THE FREE REMEDY WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME SHOULD CONTACT CHEVROLET AT 1-800-222-1020, PONTIAC AT 1-800-762-2737, OR OLDSMOBILE AT 1-800-442-6537.

Notes:

GM RECALL NO. 02049. ALSO, CUSTOMERS CAN CONTACT THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION'S AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE AT 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236).

I decided to first contact the dealership where I had the repair performed. While I do not have the person's name with whom I spoke, they were generally helpful and noted that I should contact Pontiac directly to pursue reimbursement. I was given the same telephone number mentioned in the NHTSA recall notice (1-800-762-2737). The service department at Gallagher also sent me several GM service bulletins on the matter.

I then contacted Pontiac directly (at the aforementioned number) and spoke with an agent named "Dustin". He took some relevant information (my name and contact information, the vehicle make and model and VIN) and indicated that I should expect a reimbursement form in the mail in "3 to 4 business days", which I should fill out and attach a receipt for the repair and a brief description of the issue. He gave me the following "Service Request or Case number":

Over the next 2 (two) months, I pursued the issue with GM customer service, as I did not receive the reimbursement paperwork in the time frame indicated. Below is a list of calls that I initiated to the GM customer support line.

- (Day 1, call #1) 4/16/08, 10:00 AM** – Initial dealer (Gallagher, 860-229-4881) contact
- (Day 1, call #2) 4/16/08, 10:38 AM** – Called Pontiac (1-800-762-2737), spoke with "Dustin", was assigned a Case # _____ and told to expect reimbursement forms in "3 to 4 business days"
- (Day 9, call #3) 4/25/2008, 3:44 PM** – Had not yet received paperwork, was told that a "request was in the system" to send the paperwork, but it hadn't been sent out yet. (spoke with different agent)
- (Day 16, call #4) 5/12/2008, 3:12 PM** – Spoke with a different agent, verified the mailing address and the agent confirmed that the paperwork was sent out. The agent said they would send another form.
- (Day 41, call #6) 5/28/2008, 4:20 PM** – Spoke with "Megan" (1-866-790-5600 x32063), was told that delivery is actually 4 weeks from call. She left a message with "Dustin" and told me that if he did not return my call by day's end, I should call her back. (He did not return the call)
- (Day 43, call #7) 5/29/2008, 3:30 PM** – Called "Megan", no answer; left message containing my mobile number and requested callback.

(Day 48, call #8) 6/3/2008, 1:45 PM – Called “Megan” again and again no answer. Left message.

(Day 48, call #9) 6/3/2008, 3:00 PM – Called Pontiac recall number, was told that the “case was closed” as the “documentation was refused” and never sent (although I had been told previously that it had been sent). The case was reopened and “Paulie” (a floor supervisor) told me that she would *personally* send the paperwork

(Day 63, call #10) 6/18/2008, 2:00 PM – Called Pontiac recall number, spoke with “Abbey”. She said that I was “scheduled for a callback” on the issue that very afternoon and I should wait for “Dustin” to call me back, which he never did.

(Day 65, call #11) 6/20/2008, 3:53 PM – Called Pontiac recall number, asked to speak with a manager, spoke with “Tina Marcotte” (x32062), was told that they did not have the vehicle VIN. She “promised” a scheduled callback between 10 AM and 12 PM the following Monday (6/23).

(Day 68, call #12) 6/23/2008, 8:00 AM – Called “Tina” and left a message with the vehicle VIN. Tina did not call back as scheduled

(Day 69) 6/24/2008, 12:30 PM – The only call I actually received from Pontiac, from “Tina”, telling me that the VIN I gave her is “not under any recalls at this time” and the case would be closed.

<The above do not include calls which went unanswered or where I spent time on hold and gave up before calling back at a later time>

After being told initially that I could expect reimbursement paperwork in less than one week, it took nearly **70 days** (ten weeks), **at least twelve calls** to Pontiac, **at least 5 “agents”, two “floor supervisors”** and an **untold number of hours on the phone** for my concern to be dismissed outright.

I can understand the cogs of “big business” moving slowly, but that does not merit:

- Outright lies on behalf of GM (it was obvious by the 6th or 7th week that the paperwork had not been sent, even though I had been told it had on several occasions and promised at least twice that the person with whom I spoke would “take care of it personally”)
- The refusal to return any of my calls and messages, despite the promise of a callback “within 24 hours” (this seemed to be the standard response when talking with an agent, supervisor, or leaving a message with them on their voicemail)
- The loss of information provided to GM (initially my claim was to be processed, but it took 10 weeks, at least 7 employees and two levels of management to determine they did not have the vehicle VIN)
- The continual redirection of my calls to “Dustin”, who failed to return even a single call or message.
- **The dismissal of my case, even though the issues experienced closely correlate with the recall issues.**

To The Better Business Bureau, the State of Connecticut Governing Agencies and the NHTSA

Please take heed of my complaint and be sure that in future cases, recall matters are handled more cautiously and expediently. I am not sure that the matter would have had a better resolution if the vehicle had exhibited issues after the recall was issued, but the lack of professionalism on the part of GM is inexcusable in any case.

It is worth noting that the vehicle in question is also suffering from an intake manifold gasket failure, whereby engine coolant leaks both internally and externally from the engine, possibly resulting in engine and other component failure. Ironically this is the subject of class-action lawsuits, filed both in Canada and the United States. More information can be found here: <http://www.girardgibbs.com/dexcool.html>. Please note how even after thousands of vehicle owners paid out-of-pocket to have such a repair made, litigation was still required to make GM take ownership of the situation.

Should you need to contact me to pursue this matter further, my contact information is at the top of this letter

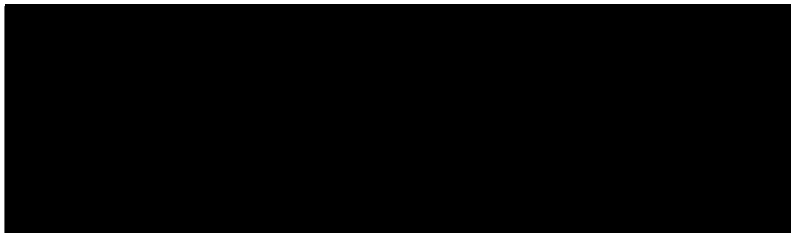
To Gallagher Buick/Pontiac/GMC

I have only had two dealings with your dealership and although I was treated well, neither of the interactions were ultimately positive ones. While I might soon be in the market for a new vehicle (see the Dexcool issue above), your parent corporation has irreparably damaged our relationship with their complete lack of professionalism and respect for their customer.

To the General Motors Corporation

This is the second GM vehicle I've owned and although I had a good impression of GM before this recall debacle, your lack of responsibility and professionalism in this matter has changed my opinion. How can I be expected to put faith in purchasing another GM vehicle in the future if all I've gotten from your customer service is the "run around", constant delays, and ultimately pure insult? Should you wish to pursue this internally, I wish you good luck and hope you have more luck in contacting your employees than I've had over the past 10 weeks.

I thank you for your time;



GALLAGHER

BUICK · PONTIAC · GMC

325 COLUMBUS BLVD. P.O. BOX 1448 NEW BRITAIN: 229-4881
TOLL FREE: SALES & SERVICE 1-800-932-8971 www.gallagherbuick.com

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CUSTOMER NO. [REDACTED]	ADVISOR CALVIN FAHEY 60	TAG NO. [REDACTED]	INVOICE DATE 08/28/02	INVOICE NO. PNCS130045
[REDACTED]	LABOR RATE [REDACTED]	LICENSE NO. [REDACTED]	COLOR BLACK/	STOCK NO.
[REDACTED]	YEAR / MAKE / MODEL 98/PONTIAC/GRAND PRIX/4 DOOR SEDAN	MILEAGE 84025	DELIVERY DATE	DELIVERY MILES
NEWINGTON, CT [REDACTED]	VEHICLE I.D. NO. 1G2WJ52MXW	[REDACTED]	SELLING DEALER NO.	PRODUCTION DATE
	F.T.E. NO.	P.O. NO.	R.O. DATE 08/26/02	
RESIDENCE PHONE [REDACTED]	BUSINESS PHONE [REDACTED]	COMMENTS		

TOTALS

PARTS DESIGNATED WITH AN ASTERISK (*) INDICATES LIFETIME
GUARANTEE APPLIES FOR CUSTOMER PAY REPAIRS

THANKS FOR DOING BUSINESS WITH GALLAGHER BUICK-PONTIAC-GMC
SERVICE DEPT. STAFF KYLE-KELLY-DAVE-MIKE-DIANA-APRIL

DEAR VALUED CUSTOMER: YOU MAY RECEIVE A SURVEY
FROM BUICK, PONTIAC, OR GMC. IF YOU ARE NOT
COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH OUR SERVICE AND CAN
NOT GIVE US A PERFECT SCORE, PLEASE CONTACT
OUR SERVICE MGR, KYLE BRADY AT (860)229-4881

100% COMPLETELY SATISFIED CUSTOMERS ARE OUR #1 PRIORITY
AT GALLAGHER BUICK-PONTIAC-GMC
SEE OUR FULL-SERVICE BODY SHOP FOR ALL YOUR COLLISION NEEDS

CUSTOMER SIGNATURE

TOTAL LABOR...	312.75
TOTAL PARTS...	671.67
TOTAL SUBLET...	0.00
TOTAL G.O.G...	0.00
TOTAL MISC CHG...	21.89
TOTAL MISC DISC...	0.00
TOTAL TAX.....	60.38
TOTAL INVOICE \$	1066.69



Thank-You!

*Service Performed By
Factory Trained Personnel*



Goodwrench Service Plus

GALLAGHER

BUICK · PONTIAC · GMC

325 COLUMBUS BLVD. P.O. BOX 1448
 NEW BRITAIN: 229-4881
 TOLL FREE: SALES & SERVICE 1-800-932-8371
 www.gallagherbuick.com

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CUSTOMER NO. [REDACTED]		ADVISOR CALVIN FAHEY 60		TAG NO. [REDACTED]	INVOICE DATE 08/28/02	INVOICE NO. PNGS130045
[REDACTED]		LABOR RATE	LICENSE NO. [REDACTED]	MILEAGE 84025	COLOR BLACK/	STOCK NO.
[REDACTED]		YEAR / MAKE / MODEL 98/PONTIAC/GRAND PRIX/4 DOOR SEDAN			DELIVERY DATE	DELIVERY MILES
NEWINGTON, CT [REDACTED]		VEHICLE I.D. NO. 1G2WJ52MXWF [REDACTED]			SELLING DEALER NO.	PRODUCTION DATE
RESIDENCE PHONE [REDACTED]		BUSINESS PHONE [REDACTED]			R.O. DATE 08/26/02	
COMMENTS						

LABOR & PARTS

J# 1 07PNZ **STEERING/SUSPENSION** **TECH(S): 34** **229.35**
 CUSTOMER STATES P/S SEEMS TO HIT A HARD SPOT WHILE TURNING LEFT
 STEERING GETS REAL TIGHT INTERMITTENTLY ONLY ON LEFT TURNS
 75.00 DG
 POWERSTEERING RACK BINDING NEEDS NEW RACK
 REPLACED POWERSTEERING RACK AND SET FRONT TOE

PARTS	QTY	FP NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	
JOB # 1	1	26079911	REM ST/GR 6.508	511.40	511.40
JOB # 1	-1	26079911	CORE RETURN	50.00	-50.00
JOB # 1	1	12345866	FLUID-POW 8.800	9.19	9.19
JOB # 1 TOTAL PARTS					470.59

JOB # 1 TOTAL LABOR & PARTS **699.94**

J# 2+07PNZ00 **MISC. STEERING** **TECH(S): 34** **83.40**
 CUSTOMER STATES REPLACE TIE RODS. CANT RELEASE FROM RACK
 BOTH OUTER TIE RODS FROZEN ON RACK
 REPLACED BOTH OUTER TIE ROD ENDS

PARTS	QTY	FP NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	
JOB # 2	2	26086579	ROD KIT 6.233	100.54	201.08
JOB # 2 TOTAL PARTS					201.08

JOB # 2 TOTAL LABOR & PARTS **284.48**

MISC.	CODE	DESCRIPTION	CONTROL NO.	
JOB # A	SS	SHOP SUPPLIES		21.89
TOTAL - MISC				21.89

COMMENTS
 204 JUST UNDER 1/2 TANK



Thank-You!

*Service performed By
 Factory Trained Personnel*

