



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

Deputy Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

December 8, 2008

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

NVS-216 nlm
Ref. # 10248108

Dear Congressman Wolf:

Thank you for your correspondence dated September 2 on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] contacted your office concerning dimming of the odometer dial in his model year (MY) 2008 Toyota Corolla during sunny days. [REDACTED] initially contacted the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) about this issue on May 5 via our online complaint form, and again by his May 17 letter to which ODI responded on May 27. We also addressed this issue in my July 10 response to your May 30 letter. In his most recent letter, [REDACTED] asks why ODI has decided not to open an investigation.

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 safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns.

We appreciate the report you provided on behalf of [REDACTED]. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. ODI considers field experience and other technical information about each particular issue. In order to ascertain the risk associated with [REDACTED]'s complaint, ODI searched its database for all reports that allege difficulty viewing the instrument panel in MY 2006 through MY 2008 Toyota Corolla vehicles, a population of 820,701 vehicles. A total of six unique complaints were identified of which none indicates a loss of vehicle control or a crash. [REDACTED] is the only complaint involving the MY 2008 Toyota Corolla and the only complaint concerning dimming of the odometer dial.



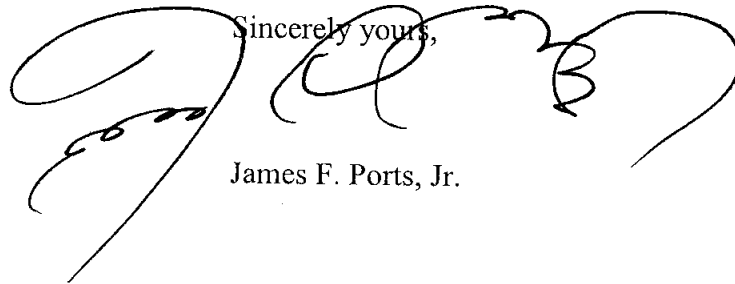
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While an obvious annoyance to [REDACTED] there does not appear to be a safety-related risk associated with this problem because the information provided by the odometer dial is not information that the driver needs for safety purposes when driving the vehicle. Our decision to not open an investigation at this time is based on a review of the field data and a review of previous investigation and recall activity for similar problems. Those previous investigations and recalls involved situations where a defect caused the entire instrument panel to fail to illuminate, rendering important safety information such as vehicle speed unreadable, or where the panel lights would not dim, which interfered with the driver's ability to see outside the vehicle. None involved the visibility of the odometer dial alone. Although the available data do not warrant the opening of a safety defect investigation at this time, we continually review all available data to determine whether an investigation may be warranted.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please have your staff 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 "James F. Ports, Jr.", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

James F. Ports, Jr.