

NVS 200



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INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)

U.S. Department
of Transportation

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

July 30, 2010

The Honorable Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
200 Federal Plaza, Suite 500
Paterson, NJ 07505

NVS-216 nlm
Ref. No. 10269861

Dear Congressman Pascrell:

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] wrote concerning an engine stalling and unintended acceleration problem in his model year (MY) 2002 Toyota RAV4.

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. However, we cannot act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

We appreciate the report you provided on behalf of [REDACTED]. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. We received [REDACTED] previous correspondence dated May 25, 2009. Owner's information that is submitted by means of a Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire, located on NHTSA's www.safercar.gov website, is automatically entered into our complaint database. The data is then reviewed and analyzed by NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation to determine whether an investigation is warranted. All complaints are reviewed, and if necessary, we will follow up by contacting the vehicle owner. Otherwise the information is entered into our database and used to identify safety-related defect trends. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused your constituent.

We understand [REDACTED] concern for the unintended acceleration event he encountered. However, the MY 2002 Toyota RAV4 is not included in the recent recalls announced by Toyota that address unintended acceleration caused by pedal entrapment and a sticky pedal. In addition, we reviewed our database in an effort to identify whether a safety defect trend exists with regard to stalling in MY 2002 Toyota RAV4 vehicles. At this time, there is insufficient evidence to warrant opening a safety defect investigation. A brochure explaining the

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investigation process is enclosed for your constituent's information; or he may visit our website at: <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/recallprocess.cfm>. The information [REDACTED] provided has been entered into our database. It will be considered with future reports to identify any safety-related defect trends that may require our attention.

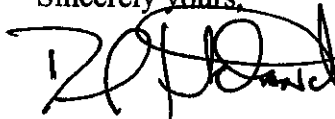
NHTSA has opened recall query (RQ10-003, summary enclosed) requesting additional information from Toyota to understand more fully and evaluate, among other things, whether the scope of the recalls (makes, models, and model years) is sufficiently broad and the recalls were done in a timely manner. NHTSA will fully investigate any possible safety-related defect trends in these vehicles regardless of whether pedal entrapment, a sticky accelerator pedal or electronic throttle control (ETC) systems appear to be an issue.

In addition, the agency is now undertaking a comprehensive look into the safety of ETC systems in all vehicles sold in the United States equipped with that technology. The agency has procured help from scientists and other experts in areas such as computer controlled electronic systems, electromagnetic interference, and software integrity from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to conduct a short-term review of ETC systems used in Toyota vehicles to determine whether they contain any possible flaws that could cause unintended acceleration. NASA's expertise in electronics, hardware, software, hazard analysis and complex problem solving ensures this review will be comprehensive. The NASA review of the ETC systems in Toyota vehicles should be completed by late summer.

The National Academy of Sciences will examine the broad subject of unintended acceleration and electronic vehicle controls across the entire automotive industry. This will not be limited to Toyota, but will cover all vehicle manufacturers. The panel will make recommendations to NHTSA on how its rulemaking, research, and defects investigation activities may be enhanced to ensure the safety of electronic control systems in motor vehicles. If either study should identify a potential safety-related defect, an investigation will be opened.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Daniel C. Smith, Associate Administrator for Enforcement, at (202) 366-3217.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Strickland", written over a horizontal line.

David L. Strickland

Enclosures

cc: Washington Office