

CL-10289185-8891

NOV 2 2009

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2009 2:34 PM
To: DataQuality, DataQuality (NHTSA)
Subject: re ODI ID Number : 10289185

Sir,
Please advise me if the letter of complaint will become visible in the documents of the
complaint: **ODI ID Number : 10289185**

As follows:

Mr. Tom Bowman

2009-10-20

Mr. Dan Smith

NHTSA

ET
7:25
11/2/09
NJ

1200 New Jersey Ave. S.E.

Washington, DC 20590

Dear Tom,

This letter is an official complaint about the incomplete, unsafe repairs and modifications to the 2005 to 2007 Blue Bird Wanderlodge 450 LXi that are being done in an attempt to remedy the conditions of the NHTSA recall. The original recall, 07V586000, indicated that the front axle on the 450 LXi could be overweight. Blue Bird stated in substance that its RV was overweight on the front axle without cargo but with the standard 4 passengers and full water (using pre-2008 definition of CCC).

The tire safety factor was not an issue in the recall but surfaced with the later complaint.

The tie rod weakness was not a cause of the recall but was a result of the need to increase the axle rating. (i.e. it was one of the remedies). The tie rods were safe at an axle load of 16,000 lbs and no tie rod recall would have occurred if the 16,000 lb. axle was sufficient as originally designed.

The recall was based on the axle being in excess of its rating and the motorhome could not be safely used with reasonable loading and designed purpose of the vehicle.

In doing the many levels of "fixes", Blue Bird has found it necessary to reduce the "No cargo", weight of the motorhome in order show an apparent decreased front axle load and to show some capacity in the storage compartments. The unloaded weight has been reduced to a non-standard, 2 passengers and ¼ water.

The new bay weight limit placards are misleading in that they do not reflect the fact that they refer to the total weight in the entire bay area, both right and left sides and in the vertical area above the bay, in the coach. Owners are not aware of this and maintaining these limits is unreasonable as they are easily overloaded even by pantry items alone.

Some of the coaches that are being released as "fixed" are overweight on the front axle when they are weighed without cargo but have 4 passengers and full water. This overweight state would satisfy the conditions, and cause of the initial recall. Much of Blue Bird's "Fix" is therefore just a manipulation of numbers.

As a safety issue, I believe that NHTSA should find it unacceptable that these coaches be allowed as they cannot be used safely for the purpose they were intended and do not remedy the defect problem of the initial recall.

The overloading of the front tires is also a significant safety issue. One of the "fixes" was to modify the Hadley air suspension system so that in drive mode, the side to side front imbalance was equalized, allowing the front tires to be within load limits.

The active Hadley system immediately removes this "equalizing" when the vehicle enters a turn.(including highway curves), as it is programmed to keep the coach level. The levelling is fairly slow, but the equalizing loss is more rapid and is easily enough to put a tire over its safe load. Note that side-to-side front imbalance can be 1000 pounds before the Hadley air suspension change

I believe that NHTSA should immediately demand proper remedies to these unsafe conditions. It is only a matter of time before someone again dies in an overloaded coach that was supposedly "fixed" by Blue Bird. NHTSA has a duty to the public to rectify this.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] (via email)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wiarion ,Ontario

[REDACTED]