

December 22, 2010

Chief Executive Officer  
Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.  
2200 Ferdinand Porsche Drive  
Herndon, VA 20171

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Earlier this year I purchased, new, a 2010 Volkswagen Jetta Sportwagen TDI.

While I was well-satisfied with my three previous Volkswagens over the past 52 years, this one has what I believe to be a huge design flaw.

Note the enclosed photo: in my opinion there's no way the head restraint on the driver's (or front passenger's) seat would protect my **five-foot-tall** wife from serious injury in the event of a significant rear-end collision.

Note that her head is in contact with the head restraint, but at a point much lower on the restraint than recommended. Due to the shape, size and position of the restraint, *I believe the force of a rear-end collision would drive her head downward to her chest while the upper bones of her cervical vertebrae would be forced rearward into the V-shaped cavity formed by the head restraint and the seat back.* Did your crash-testing delve into this scenario? Results?

For drivers and front seat passengers five feet tall and shorter, I believe the federal mandate requiring head restraints to be no more than 2.2 inches from the back of the occupant's head -- at least with the VW design -- is a complete bust, and may actually contribute to injury to such persons.

I normally drive a car at least ten years. Therefore, for my wife and me, and perhaps on behalf of those other VW owners and passengers five feet tall and under, I'm asking for a re-design of these head restraints (in your next model year run) and the opportunity to retrofit them in my VW.

Until then, we hope to reduce the risk of injury by raising the head restraint completely out of the way, relying on the seat back itself to serve as head restraint. Not exactly what your engineers had in mind, I'm sure.

And in case you're wondering why I bought the car with these head restraints, the short answer is simply "Perhaps I shouldn't have".

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Arlington Heights, IL [REDACTED]  
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✓ cc. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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