

March 3, 2011

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Yoshio Hasunuma  
Chairman of the Board, President, and Chief Executive Officer

Thomas J. Doll  
Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer  
Subaru of America, Inc.  
P.O. Box 6000  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-6000

Via Facsimile: 856-488-8547

Dear Messrs. Hasunuma and Doll:

I write in reference to vehicle ID number JF1SG65644H [REDACTED] a 2004 Subaru Forester 2.5XS. I am writing because I am deeply concerned that Subaru of America may be aware of a head gasket leakage problem on Subaru Forrester XS models for 2004, and perhaps other years, and has not addressed the problem, done recalls, or responded in a proper manner with customers.

After conducting some research, I discovered that the many mechanics and lay people have written on blogs or posted information on websites. In reviewing some consumer sites, it appears that Subaru has been aware of problems with 2003 and earlier models. A second head gasket leak on my 2004 Forester makes me raise a red flag.

A little more than a year ago, while my care was still under extended warranty, I took it in to my regular Subaru dealer in Bloomfield. The car overheated in during cold weather, which surprised me because of the weather and because it was and is serviced regularly. Upon performing diagnostic review, the Service Department informed me that the head gasket was leaking and needed to be replaced. The cost was extremely steep, and when I called Subaru because the problem stemmed from mechanical defect rather than wear and tear, they offered to cover half the cost. We agreed to accept their gesture of good will.

Interestingly, when I shared my woes with a friend, who lives in Philadelphia, PA, and she told me that same thing happened with her Forrester. She thought that the motor company knew about these problems, but did not want to address them because of concerns about liability and recall costs. Is it possible that Subaru has done statistical analysis that shows smaller costs for partial repair coverage than having to compensate consumers millions of dollars for knowingly and willfully putting out a defective product and/or failing to inform consumers? She was a longtime Subaru owner and for the first time decided to purchase a new car from another company.

It is second time that I have had repair my car's head gasket. This time, I have serious concerns. How do we know that this will not present a problem a third time? As I mentioned earlier, I did research and concluded that a significant number of people have had negative experiences with leaking head gaskets. When I emailed the headquarters, and they offered a mere \$500 toward a \$2,000+ job (the price Bloomfield Subaru quoted), it upset me gravely. Of course, this is all happening now that the car is no longer under extended warranty.

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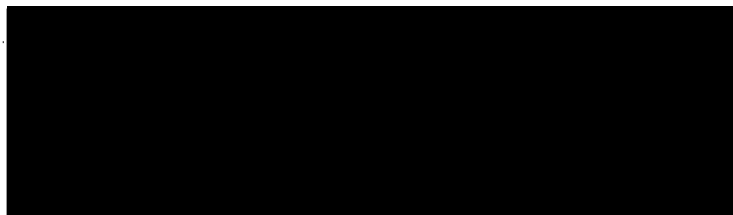
Subaru's response is unacceptable. I now believe that they should have paid the full cost of parts and labor for the initial replacement, and that they should do the same for this recurrence. Because of the head gasket problem, and what appears to lack of good service work at the Bloomfield dealer, the radiator died; I had to replace that too for just under \$700 (I did this with my longtime dealer in CT). There were also additional costs with having to rent a car for two days, while the work was performed. This is in addition to the \$1,700 that I spent to replace the head gasket; I had lost confidence in my regular, local dealer, so I went to a mechanic in Trenton, NJ and was able to get the job completed for less than the dealer quoted and had a thorough review of the car in addition to the gasket replacement. This mechanic was exceedingly thorough and my car sounds almost new again.

I draw from William Shakespeare's Hamlet and state, "something is rotten in Denmark." Subaru needs to make this right. I have spent thousands on repairing problems that have to do with a significant mechanical defect. This is unjust. Leaders at Subaru, I need you to make this right.

This problem with head gaskets represents a huge red flag. I have also copied neutral, governmental and nongovernmental agencies to make them aware of the issue. No one else should suffer as I have. It is my hope that they will have documentation from individuals who have experienced problems and can add this issue to databases, as they review Subaru cars.

I look forward to your reply and resolution to this issue within the next four weeks. I would appreciate payment for recent mechanical costs, back payment for the last repair, and a payment for rental car costs.

You may contact me via email at [REDACTED] or at the address above.



#### Attachments

Cc: Department of Law and Public Safety  
Division of Consumer Affairs Box 45025  
Newark, NJ 07101

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, West Building  
Washington, DC 20590

Center for Auto Safety 1825  
Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite  
330 Washington, DC 20009-5708

**From:** CustDlrServices@subaru.com  
**Subject:** RE: (SR #:1-1238107546) Vehicle Problem  
**Date:** February 4, 2011 4:45:22 PM EST  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Reply-To:** CustDlrServices@subaru.com

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your patience in my response. After further review, I would like to assist you in \$500 reimbursement as a goodwill gesture. Please authorize repairs when convenient to you and submit the invoice and paid receipt as an attachment to this E-mail.

Sincerely,

Megan Pitko  
Subaru of America, Inc.  
Customer/Dealer Services Department  
1-800-SUBARU3 (1-800-782-2783)  
Service Request #1-1238107546

[THREAD ID:1-KH4Y6Q]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 1/27/2011 05:16:04 PM  
**To:** CustDlrServices@subaru.com  
**Subject:** (SR #:1-1238107546) Vehicle Problem

I was on hold for 30 minutes, so I gave up. I took my car into the Bloomfield dealer that I normally go to because the heat was not working. After running diagnostics, they told me that the driver side head gasket is broken and leaking antifreeze. Last year, around the same time, I replaced both head gaskets. After conducting research, I discovered that head gasket problems are endemic with Subaru vehicles and with Forresters. Your HQ insisted that 2004 vehicles were not part of the problem. We agreed to split the costs. Now I question whether there are larger issues because in a short time frame, the problem has returned and the expense to fix it is extremely costly. I am both upset about and disappointed about it, as I have been a loyal Subaru owner and regularly encourage folks to consider getting Subarus. This new issue now gives me pause. I am going to do more research, and I am also planning to flag this with the Better Business Bureau and the NJ Attorney General's Office, the National Transportation Safety board, in case there have been other complaints.

KeepMeUpdated: { }

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National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
(NHTSA)  
400 7th Street, SW, Room 5232  
Washington, DC 20590

