August 3, 2011

FAX ONLY
(202) 366-3081

MR FRANK BORRIS
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
U S DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADM
1200 NEW JERSEY AVE SE WEST BLDG
WASHINGTON DC 20590

RE: FORD E-150 VAN WAGONS (2008-2011)
2011 E-150 CLUB VAN XL PASSENGER WAGON WITH TOWING PACKAGE
VIN #1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

Dear Mr. Borris:

It was a pleasure talking to you on August 2. This supplements my fax of August 2, 2011. It is reassuring to know that a consumer has the NHTSA for protection.

I purchased the above described (see VIN number) 2011 E-150 van through the dealership. It was a factory direct special order.

The dangerous symptoms described in mine of August 2, 2011 are apparently indicative of all E-150 vans. This van is used for dual purposes – a cargo van or a passenger carrying van – seating up to 12 people. I tow a boat that weights 1 ½ tons; consequently, the van I ordered has a towing package meaning that no sway can be present during towing.

I have owned Ford vans all my life and I currently have the same type of van but it is year 2005 and there are no control problems experienced and that includes the times that I hauled my boat to the lake.

The 2011 van sways on curves and sways on the highway when speeds exceed 45 mph. It is best described as if you were sitting still on a lake in a boat and a wave hits the boat sideways causing a rocking or swaying sensation. I have seen this described as front to rear sideways sway and also sideway sway. Other words used to describe it would be a snake-like sway and also a direct side sway.

My van and a lot of others just like it have the towing package meaning that there is supposed to be zero sway when you are towing. Sway is very dangerous and causes a whiplash effect on whatever item is being towed. Most boat trailers are wider than the wheel base of what is pulling it. Generally on a two lane road there might be six inches between the center stripe and six inches of road before you hit the side shoulder. Not much room for error.

When an 18-wheeler passes the 2011 van or under windy conditions "sway" is experienced even at lower speeds. At expressway speeds, in excess of 50 mph, sway is experienced. It is more prominent at lower speeds when accelerating from on ramps to highways. Sway also occurs in curves and with sudden necessary adjustments in steering.

The first time the van was taken to the dealership there was only approximately 400 miles on the odometer. At this moment there is 1,000 miles on the odometer. On the first trip to the dealership the technicians were perplexed because specifications checked out; however, it was confirmed by the technicians that sway was present, especially at speeds exceeding 50 mph. The technicians did their job and made a lot phone calls and came back and stated that the difference between the 2005 model that I currently have in my possession and the new 2011 model is that there are stronger springs, a 10-ply load E tire and I have recently learned that the anti-sway bar was drastically changed from direct contact with the frame to a tab and link setup. Also, the diameter of the sway bar was considerably reduced. The tires are stiffer, the springs stronger which means everything below the body is less forgiving. The weakest connection is between the frame and the body that includes the undersized anti-sway bar. The beefed up frame is not going anywhere; therefore, the body moves thus creating sway.

I am going to describe to you what I believe is happening. When a driver is traveling down the road in an E-150, 2011 Ford Van Wagon sooner or later he will experience "sway". The driver then panics by over-steering to try and correct the sway when in reality it is best to endure the sway and stay on course. Your typical driver is not going to know this. A driver is going to react to the body of the van shifting with moving the steering wheel in the opposite direction and; therefore, create over-steer and the propensity for a deadly crash or rollover.

With the design changes including the beefed up springs and the very stout 10-ply sidewall tires, the frame is stiffer than ever and accordingly the only part of the vehicle that is going to move in wind and road conditions is the cabin or the body of the van. Because the frame is stiffer and less forgiving, the cabin on top of the frame is going to "try to wander" off the frame. Therefore, whereas the frame was somewhat forgiving before and absorbed some of the swaying action, all of the sway is transferred and felt by the body of the vehicle that sits on top of the frame. The current support system is inadequate to hold the body properly in place during travel. Based on measurements, the body of the 2011 is between 2 inches and 3 inches higher than the 2005 model. The greater the distance from the road the greater the probability of sway.

All of the aftermarket sway bar manufacturers (Hellwig) produce anti-sway bars that are larger in diameter and manufactured without tabs and links using a special metal alloy component that is very strong. These sway bar manufacturers make it a point in their advertising to state their bars are thicker, stronger and designed better than inadequate factory sway bars. A Hellwig rear anti-sway bar would probably eliminate about 60% of "sway". A front anti-sway bar would eliminate probably 20% more of the sway and the remaining sway would be eliminated with a rear trac bar. Also suspect is the rubber quality as mentioned before as there is a crack in the rubber on one of the shock absorber bushings. If this poor quality of rubber was used on all the bushings this would contribute to sway.

August 3, 2011
Mr. Frank Borris

The previously mentioned NHTSA Item No. 1032624 which is a Service Bulletin is an attempted cover-up of this problem. It is an advisory to adjust the steering gear mesh. As explained in the faxes previously provided, this adjustment resulted in excessive play in the steering wheel which, if you think about it, is supposed to create time to allow the body to recover from the sway motion. The excessive play created by the adjustment also in realty causes over steering because the driver tries to make a frantic recovery and turns the steering wheel opposite the sway direction thereby creating deadly over steer.

The E-150 frames are used by conversion van companies and RV companies. There are many blogs and email strings on the Internet describing the exact symptoms that we have encountered with our van that was shipped straight to the dealership from the Ford factory. Based on Internet testimonials, sway problems seem to be corrected with the application of a front and improved rear anti-sway bar coupled with the possibility of a "trac bar".

In this situation I describe, NHTSA does not have to wait for an accident or death to occur. Remember, the sway problem is severe at the excessive speeds – likely conditions to cause death if there is an accident. The problem exists on all 2011 E-150's.

The dealership tested other E-150's as has the Ford engineer out of Cincinnati OH and everyone including the technicians at the dealership have concluded that the sway symptoms are indicative of all E-150 vans. Therefore, this particular problem is an easy one for NHTSA to diagnose. All that is necessary is to take a 2011 model out for a test drive, approach 75 mph and then start playing with the steering wheel. Also, the sway can be experienced as one accelerates on an expressway ramp.

After you test drive a 2011 E-150, I would strongly urge NHTSA to send out an advisory targeting all owners of E-150 vans from 2008 through 2011 not to exceed 45 mph until Ford corrects the sway problem. If you read testimonials it appears that aftermarket sway bar applications and possibly a trac bar should completely eliminate the sway problem. If a consumer purchases a towing package it is vitally important that no sway issues exist. The sway is very dangerous and; therefore, there have been no attempts to try to tow.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

[redacted]
Louisville KY [redacted]

August 3, 2011
Mr. Frank Borris

cc: **FAX ONLY**
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MR ROGER SAUL
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U S DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

FAX ONLY
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MR ANDY REED

1

August 10, 2011

FAX ONLY
584-2278

MS VIRGINIA PAYNE – PARTS & SVC DIR
DOWNTOWN FORD
809 S 5TH ST
LOUISVILLE KY 40203

FAXED

RE: 2011 ECONOLINE FORD CLUB VAN WAGON
VIN# 1FMNE1BW1BDA58723
WITH TOWING PACKAGE

Dear Virginia:

I received a call today from Ms. Shanna Santiago calling from Central Florida on behalf of Ford Motor Company. Ms. Santiago indicated she had spoken to you this morning which means you had already received my 13-page fax that was transmitted and received by Downtown Ford on the evening of August 9. Ms. Santiago did not have the benefit of the 13 pages of information; therefore, she was not prepared to discuss body roll, sway and wandering characteristics of the 2011 Passenger Van Wagon that I own. I mentioned to her I was still waiting on a response from you as to what was causing the "walking" of the rear sway bar in which five experts I consulted with stated that this means the bar is undersized and defective. I have been told this is dangerous and it is an indication of severe body roll as the rear sway bar is supposed to come back to home, so to speak.

Also, I have not been given a reason why the shock absorber bushing is cracked. Either we are looking at defective rubber or the shock absorber cannot handle the body roll and the movement caused an impact and therefore caused the bushing to split. I am told that the left to right shifting of the sway bar is a very dangerous situation and a tell-tale sign that the sway bar cannot handle the severe body roll.

Wandering, sway and body roll are all the same and exhibit all the same characteristics. When there is a slight wind and it hits the van broadside such as between 8 and 15 mph, which is what we have experienced, the sensation is that the wind is pushing the van off of the frame, i.e. it is starting to wander in the direction that the wind is pushing the body. This sensation can be created instantly by trying to avoid a hazard on the highway and on curves because of the g-forces.

Virginia, you and the engineer know exactly what is going on with this van. If you do not, then you need a new job.

August 10, 2011
Virginia Payne

I have taken the liberty of consulting with five experts, four of which are suspension specialists.

They are the very best in their fields. There was no sense providing you with a summary of my conversations with all of the experts, when basically all of the recommendations in the end were the same.

Enclosed you will find recommendations made by Performance Suspension Technologies. These people had no incentive to give me slanted advice because they had no products that I could purchase to satisfy the problem I was experiencing. The same is true with Hellwig and Roadmaster.

I spoke with two product technical specialists at Hellwig and Roadmaster. You will observe that Mr. Dave Wheeler is the lead engineer at Hellwig. Please note the offer that Mr. Wheeler presented to me. He indicated for future product development that Hellwig would make the necessary repairs to the van to correct the defects, to my complete satisfaction, at no charge. There are two truck plants at Ford Motor and I am sure trucks are shipped out periodically to Washington State. One truck hauled in combination with six or seven trucks headed to Washington State would not be much of a cost for Ford to bear. Ford could pick up the tab having the van shipped back to me from Washington to Kentucky.

All of the technicians and experts confirm that my van should not be driven over 45 mph and if there are similar characteristics being exhibited by other E-150 vans then I should not place myself into an unsafe situation knowing that a Ford engineer mentioned that the same characteristics exhibited in all E-150's was similar to what I have experienced with my 2011 Passenger Van with the towing package.

Ms. Santiago in Florida agreed it is wrong to compare an E-150 cargo van to a passenger van with a towing package coupled with limited slip differential. One van is made for hauling passengers and safe towing. The other van is made for hauling cargo. As to the percentage of E-150's that are manufactured that are Club Van Wagon XL's with a towing package and limited slip differential, I would think it would be quite difficult to find a model like mine and drive it around. I am sure it is going to exhibit what I have experienced with my van.

I am not interested in other vans – I only want the deficiencies corrected in my E-150, 2011 Ford Club Van Wagon XL with the towing package and limited slip differential.

The Ford technician that I have used for many years confirmed that the sway bar is undersized and should not be shifting to the right, as was the case when I returned the vehicle to Downtown Ford. He was the one that noticed that the shock absorber bushing was cracked and also the design change to a tab and link on the sway bar.

August 10, 2011
Virginia Payne

All aftermarket manufacturers produce sway bars that are substantially different than OEM sway bars. All of these aftermarket sway bars without exception are much larger in diameter. What does that tell you? They are made with tempered steel and not cold steel and they insert directly into the frame.

Virginia, have you ever seen the Ford automobiles in a Nascar race? These cars are only about 1 inch from the asphalt. Also, they are constantly making pit stops to adjust the suspension so that the body does not roll and slam into the sides of the track. A minute adjustment means all the difference in the world.

My van is 3 inches higher due to the beefed up springs. It's kind of like a van body on top of stilts and where the stilts touch the ground the anchors are insufficient.

Virginia, again I care about correcting the defects in my E-150. I could care less about cargo vans that are E-150's or the same E-150 platforms used by RV manufacturers which have a long history of problems with the body roll that the E-150 platform produces. I guess that's why everyone looks to Hellwig and Roadmaster to correct the deficiencies.

It is a really good offer on the table from Hellwig and the responsibility shifts to Hellwig to correct the body roll issues. I have had to purchase an extra four months of insurance so it should not be a problem for Ford to foot the bill to transport the van out to Washington and back to Kentucky. You never know, we all might learn something more about how to correct the defects.

Another alternative is for a local Hellwig affiliated company such as Medley correct the body roll and Ford absorb all the costs.

Another alternative is a full refund plus reimbursement for the extra vehicle coverage on my 2005 van that I had wanted to sell.

Thanks for your continued cooperation.

[redacted]

Louisville KY [redacted]

[redacted]

lpb

Attachments: Recommendations by Hellwig
Recommendations by Performance Suspension Technologies

August 10, 2011

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RE: FORD E-150 VAN WAGONS (2008-2011)
2011 E-150 CLUB VAN XL PASSENGER WAGON WITH TOWING PACKAGE
VIN #1FMNE1BW1BD[redacted]

Dear Mr. Borris:

Enclosed is an August 10 letter directed to Virginia Payne at Downtown Ford. Also enclosed is a transcript of a conversation I had with Shanna Santiago with Ford Motor Company out of Central Florida. All of it is self-explanatory. It is obvious that Ford Motor is trying to cover up their problems.

For some reason Ford Engineer, James Michnya, wants me to ride with him in the defective E-150 Vans and then psychologically convince me that because all of the E-150 vans exhibit the same body roll, sway problems and wandering that somehow this justifies and compromises my safety concerns and therefore I should keep the van and risk a serious accident. Please add this to the E-150 file that you have.

Hopefully, you have looked over my previous fax of August 9. It included weather statistic information and in those situations where we were experiencing body roll, the winds were 8 to 14 mph.

Thanks for your time and consideration on this matter and have a good day.

[redacted]
Louisville KY [redacted]
[redacted]

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MR RANDY REED

August 9, 2011

RE: 2011 VAN – RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY PERFORMANCE SUSPENSION TECHNOLOGIES

I spoke to a technical consultant at Performance Suspension Technologies (PST) on the morning of August 7.

After describing my experiences with the E-150, 2011 van, Mr. Moore indicated that the changes made to the 2011 model served truck characteristics at the expense of passenger transport and trailering. He stated the van, for the use intended as a passenger van with a towing package, is not safe and suitable for travel at a higher rate of speed such as between 50 mph and 70 mph.

In terms of use, there are very few 2011 E-150 Passenger Van Wagons manufactured compared to all E-150's and other type trucks on the market. This is why aftermarket products to correct body roll and sway are not readily available or in stock; however, properly engineered anti-sway bars can be special ordered and specially made to eliminate what I have encountered. What has been described according to Mr. Moore may be typical of the many E-150 platforms; however, the changes in the 2011 Passenger Van Wagon model come at the detriment of passenger transport and towing.

Mr. Moore indicated that the van is top heavy and contributing factors happen to be a higher distance from the road that alters and raises the center of gravity creating greater instability. The manufacturing changes on the E-150 2011 XL passenger van increase rigidity and also cannot handle deflection that is necessary to prevent sway encountered under typical highway traveling conditions.

Mr. Moore went on to state that the changes in the 2011 E-150 passenger van with the towing package has caused a substantial increase in body roll and back and forth sway. He also indicated that the sway bar is undersized and under no circumstances should there be a right and left shift aka "walking" as is the case with my Van Wagon. This has been confirmed by a number of sources that state the slight up and down movement of sway bars is expected but not a left to right shift causing metal contact. Mr. Moore stated that under no circumstances should there be any towing by this vehicle until suspension deficiencies have been corrected.

There have been so few E-150 2011's manufactured that most OEM aftermarket companies do not carry or stock the products. At the time of my call to Mr. Moore on the morning of August 8, he admitted that he had no products in stock that PST could send me to rectify the unsafe body roll and sway that I described. It is the same description that I relayed to Virginia at Downtown Ford on August 9.

August 9, 2011

Spoke with Dave Wheeler at approximately 3:17 p.m. on August 8. Mr. Wheeler is the lead engineer for Hellwig based in Washington.

I described the symptoms and handling of my 2011 Ford Club Van Wagon XL with a towing package and limited slip differential. Wheeler said that a 2011 model was needed for Hellwig's future product development and indicated if I found a way to transport the vehicle to Washington DC that Hellwig would correct all the problems at no cost.

Mr. Wheeler had indicated that the current rear sway bar is insufficient and that there was no question that aftermarket sway bars were necessary that were larger in diameter, engineered correctly and applied correctly to the frame. He also stated that aftermarket shock absorbers would be a good idea and that polyethylene bushings were probably needed for the aftermarket sway bar.

Mr. Wheeler concurred that the vehicle was top heavy and what was connecting the frame to the body was insufficient. He also concurred that the changes made in the 2011 model would increase body roll and sway and also account for "wandering" that drivers were experiencing. He concurred that it is likely that most drivers would react incorrectly, grab the steering wheel and turn in the opposite direction of the body roll. This would be ill-advised and would create conditions for a severe accident.

Mr. Wheeler concurred that as speed is built up the wind resistance becomes greater; consequently, the reason for extreme sway and body roll problems. Mr. Wheeler indicated that the steering gear mesh should not have been loosened and typically it is adjusted after the vehicle has had several years of wear to "tighten up" free play in the steering wheel. He also indicated that prior alignment adjustment as recommended in the TSB would have minimal if no affect upon correcting body roll and sway.

He emphasized it was the body moving and not the frame platform underneath.

Mr. Moore who is a specialist made the following recommendations which are consistent with recommendations made by two other technicians and an engineer at Helwig and Roadmaster. The following changes are listed in order of importance:

- Larger diameter front and rear solid sway bars made with tempered "memory" steel attached direct to the frame and other additional points of attachments to the frame.
- OEM performance shock absorbers such as what is available through KYB.
- Polygraphic or polyethylene bushings replacing the existing inadequate rubber bushings.
- Front steering stabilizers.
- A smaller tire size and increased rim which would have no effect upon the mph speed indicator.
- Lower springs to bring the center of gravity closer to the pavement.

Mr. Moore emphasized that the van is top heavy and the platform is more rigid than ever in the 2011 model. This model van cannot handle deflection of wind and other contributing factors of highway driving including the avoidance of roadway hazards and sudden but necessary maneuvering to avoid collisions. The anchoring of suspension is inadequate. All of the changes in the model 2011 increase the probability of the suspension not being able to handle the increased body roll and accordingly the recommended changes are necessary to handle deflection thereby eliminating body roll, sway and wandering.

None of the technicians recommending the adjustment of the steering mesh gear or tire adjustments unless such recommendations came from an OEM company with a solution to decrease the tire size, increase the rim size and bring the van closer to the pavement surface.

Mr. Moore indicated a trac bar is not necessary as typically those are used for "out-of-the-hole shots" such as dragsters, drag racing, etc. and would add nothing to correct the problems. Mr. Moore stated that the limited slip differential feature in his view was not a contributing factor to the body roll that was described.

Mr. Moore was in agreement that based on the OEM features that came with the van at the time of delivery were not conducive to passenger interstate traveling or for that matter any type of traveling at speeds over 45 mph. He stated that the van as delivered was defective as to its intended use. This was consistent with statements made by the Helwig and Roadmaster technicians.

CONVERSATION WITH SHANNA SANTIAGO WITH FORD MOTOR CO., CENTRAL FLORIDA – 866-631-3788, EXT. 7737, AT 10:07 A.M. AUGUST 10, 2011, ECONOLINE

[redacted] – "Are you aware that the van was taken to the dealership, and the technicians looked the van over and they said, [redacted] this van is according to specifications. I thought there was an alignment problem. Is that part of your records?"

SS – "That you thought it was an alignment issue?"

[redacted] – "Uh-huh, because there were a lot of control problems with it. Anyway, I had the van for 20.., my son took it out with 60 miles on the odometer and he couldn't keep it on the road, okay? There was some wind about 10-15 mph and he couldn't keep it on the road."

SS – "It was more than 60 miles....

[redacted] – "No, I only had 60 miles on the odometer.

SS – "Okay."

[redacted] – "and he was doing some expressway driving and then a country road he was taking some people from a restaurant to the casino in Indiana and he had to do some expressway driving and some country road driving. He called me up and said Dad there is something wrong with this vehicle. Now my son has been driving vans, he is 30, and he has been driving them since he was 16. He always drives my van. I said that's news to me. I kind of brushed it off initially but he is a better driver than me and I should have listened to him. So the condition was, it's called body roll or sway, okay? That's the term I am using right now today. So he brought it home and I took it to the dealership. My wife had also taken it out and she said beyond 50 mph or 45 mph I cannot drive this vehicle, I am scared. My wife has been driving the Ford van vehicles as long as I have, since age 20. We have had nothing but Ford vans. So I would hope this would be taken into consideration that we probably have more experience with the van wagons than anybody in the country, driving wise. So, she took it out and said, yes there is something wrong. So I dropped it off at Downtown Ford. The technicians said you know the alignment checks out, all the specs check out. I said take it out and drive it, take it up to 70 mph and start playing with the steering wheel. They came back and said, oh my God, we are baffled. We are going to call around town, this shouldn't be doing this. Are you aware of this?

SS – "Um, no they did not tell me about, what I was told is that they did find that the steering was stiff."

[redacted]- "Well, maam let me finish. So anyway, you are a good listener and that's part of trying to solve the problem. So, this part is essential. They started calling around town and they said we have a customer here, we don't sell a lot of these vans, we don't sell hardly any of these passenger van wagons, what's the deal? They came back and said, alright here are the changes in the van. They put in new springs, the van rides higher off the ground, okay, and they changed the sway bar the rear sway bar underneath, okay, and they have load E 10-ply tires. So in the end they said Mr. Williams the frame is beefed up and it is really stiff and so what happens is because everything was beefed up and at the frame the body on top is moving. It is not staying over the top of the frame like it should and apparently this is a symptom that is presenting itself in all E-150 platforms. I said oh, that's interesting. So in any event, I took it on a trip to Scottsville KY. It just so happens the conditions were the same as my son. The winds were 10 to 15 mph as you will see in the information I faxed Virginia from the National Weather Service Bureau. My wife took it out on the first 50 miles and pulled over, she was shaken, she couldn't drive anymore. I observed what she was doing.

Now, I took over and experienced the same thing. Every time an 18-wheeler would come by the top of the body would shake. Anytime the wind would hit us broadside it would move let's say if the wind came from the left side it would knock the body to the right and then what a driver would normally do, they would think that the whole van is traveling to the right but only the body on the frame is shifting to the right and then they take the steering wheel and they jerk it to the left to try to get the body back when they should do nothing. They should just sit there and white-knuckle it waiting it for the body to get on top of the frame. Okay? When you do that, it is over-steer. When you do that you are going to have a serious accident and somebody is going to die."

SS – "Right, we will have....

[redacted]- "Yes it was maam, and again, we have pulled boats all our lives, my wife has pulled boats, we have been in every situation imaginable, we go down country roads where there might be a 4-inch space on one side of the divider line and 4-inches on the ditch down below. Now, you are doing all this, on a website there is a situation where the 2010, and I don't know when these changes took place, because I have a 2005 model, that there were two near death experiences exactly the same that I have described to you in 10 to 20 mph conditions. Exactly. You need to go to the website and look at it. These people almost died. Now, so given all of that, I don't care about any other E-150 van, I care about my van."

SS – "Right."

[redacted]- "Now, they (Virginia, the shop foreman and James Michyna) took the van out after I took it back to the dealership. (Meanwhile) I talked to three experts, four. I talked to a Ford Technician, Certified, whose has been my personal mechanic for years, I spoke with a suspension specialist and two other technical specialists with two different companies. None of the parts are available for my van. So they did not even have an incentive to sell me the

parts but they told me what the problem was. Now, there is a sway bar (OEM) underneath the van in the rear. The new sway bar on the 2011 is a ¾ inch tube. It is attached with what they call tabs and links. The tabs and the links are a change in the design and so is that (sway) bar underneath. When the shop foreman, James Michnya, and Virginia (came back from test driving they) said let's adjust the mesh gear steering and let's adjust the tires. If you look at that, that is from a 2010 Service Bulletin not a 2011. You never should have messed with that mesh gear on a new vehicle because what that does, you adjust that to tighten up loose steering, okay. When they did that and loosened it up, alright we took it for a ride down a country road and before when you took the steering wheel you could navigate a curve by adjusting the steering wheel to 2 o'clock. Now, you have to go to 5 o'clock, so there is extreme play. I don't know if their philosophy is, let's loosen this up, it will give the (van) body enough time to rebound and come back up on top of the frame and maybe this customer will be happy. When I left there he (shop foreman) told me he had gone out on a drive with Mr. Michnya and he (shop foreman) said he had to threaten Mr. Michnya to stop doing what he was doing because he was so scared. Did they share that letter that I sent them with you outlining all of that?

SS – "Um, no. I did not know that. I haven't talked to the shop foreman.

[redacted] – "Okay and don't you agree if they called in the engineer, Michnya, that they said there is a problem here and we can't explain it because specs show everything, we need an engineer to help us. Don't you agree?"

SS – "Absolutely, that's his role."

[redacted] – "That's his role, okay. So, I took it out and it made matters worse because that's not why there is body role. Now, so what I did, I took the van back in. Before I did, my Ford certified mechanic looked it over. He said there is a crack (the shock absorber bushing) and do you know, did they tell you there is a crack? -- and this van only has 1,000 miles on it, there is a crack in the rubber (bushing) on the shock absorber. Okay. The shock absorber bushing. That's part of what the frame is attached to."

SS – "The shock absorber bushing."

[redacted] – "Yea, are you aware of that? Did they tell you that?"

SS – "No.

[redacted] – "You are doing fine, just keep listening."

SS – "I just want to let you know [redacted] you know a lot of the reasons why the dealer has not provided me with some of the information that you have provided me is because um my role here is to really insure that we are utilizing all the resources ....

[redacted] – "Okay, okay, I don't have much more to go in the story. So,"

SS – "Okay, I just want to let you know that I am not.....

[redacted] – "Okay but you are a good listener and you are understanding this, which you know – you are pretty good. So anyway, also the sway bar, the rear sway bar that is supposed to prevent body roll. It has shifted from where it is supposed to be to the right side of the vehicle, shifted. Metal is touching metal. That's the most instrumental thing you can have on this type of vehicle to prevent body roll. Okay. So that was redesigned. The previous models have that sway bar going directly into the frame, not a tab and link setup. Alright? So, we got a problem there and then I had a leak in the, one of the axles was leaking fluid. So Virginia told me it was normal for left to right shift of the sway bar which is called in the industry "walking". I have called on all my experts that I have mentioned to you and they said no, it means it is defective, it is wrong, it can move up and down but it cannot shift to the right and left. That means it is not holding the body in place. It is shifting along with the body. Does that make sense to you?"

SS – "Right."

[redacted] – "I asked all the experts what they thought the problem was. It was a consensus. They said all aftermarket sway bars are thicker, they are solid, they are not a tube they are solid. They are tempered steel meaning they have memory. That sway bar (OEM on the new van) is made with cold steel it is not make with solid steel, and it is attached wrong. It needs to go into the frame. Also, either the shock absorber is insufficient and it caused it to crack or the rubber is bad and if the rubber is bad then all the bushings are bad, because it is made from the same rubber batch."

SS – "Okay, so you said is it proper?

[redacted] – "It is cracked, it is rubber bushing, it is cracked. It shouldn't be cracked. It is a brand new van. I mentioned that to you earlier. And so they (my experts) said and it was unanimous, to correct the problem you need an aftermarket sway bar that is correct front and back and you need a special performance shock absorber and then you might need, if the rubber is defective, polyethylene bushings. Now get this, my story..

SS – "What was that thing, I just want to

[redacted] "Polyethylene?"

SS – "No, the sway bars front and back, aftermarket."

[redacted] – "Yes and a front sway bar and special performance shocks if the shock is not doing its job and it cracked the rubber. You know when it comes down maybe it cracked the rubber. Either it is defective rubber or the shock is not designed to handle the changes that were made in this van."

I called Hellwig out of Washington. You know what they told me? The guy said this story amazes me. If you will ship this van to me in Washington or drive it up here, I will fix it free of charge because of future product development we can see there is going to be a need for these bars on this model. So I have an offer, if Ford Motor Co, you know in Louisville KY you manufacture a lot of trucks here, I am sure they are being sent to Washington. So if Ford wants to pay that cost to have it shipped, if it is shipped with 5 or 6 other trucks it wouldn't be much, pay for it to come back, you are not out a penny (for repairs). They have offered to fix it for free. If they don't you all need to fix it. Now, the consensus is the same as to what is needed. Alright, there is a sway problem and what's happened is, have you seen these race cars that Ford has on the Nascar circuits. They are 1-inch from the ground. Have you ever seen those aprons in the front of the cars? Well in this van, because of the springs that were put in it, it has been raised three extra inches. It's like putting a van on stilts. It is not as stable. You need the lowest center of gravity that you can. So when they made all of these changes, they have created a situation where the body on the top sways and it rolls. That's what it is called because the body can't stay put on top of the frame or there are not enough attachments to keep it from the sway action. So you need to have her send you that 13-page thing (fax) that I sent (on August 9) and it outlines everything."

SS – "...I mean she said she did have a lot of information for me to give [redacted] a call, I did want to discuss it, you know of course it could be with any questions I may have or any questions you may have .....

[redacted] – "Well maam I hope you think that, I got frustrated a little bit

SS – "You have done an excellent job and...

[redacted] – "Yea, you know I forgot and my son is an engineer, !@# he graduated from Purdue and they do a lot of car stuff up there and I took an engine apart when I was 16 years old so I know a little bit about this stuff and you know I am pretty good but I mean I thought it was kind of odd that Mr. Michnya would say we have problems with all of these vans basically. They are exhibiting the same characteristics as your van. And that to me is scary. Now you have to remember most of these vans are cargo vans and they don't go over 50 mph. You know people are using them for cargo inner city and then you have some that are inner city churches that use them but it is not restricted and it is supposed to be safe enough to go to any mph, and it is really dangerous at 50 to 80 mph. Now what I would like for you to do is to go out, go to the dealership, get a 2011 E-150 get in it, say I want to go for a test drive, take it up to 70 mph and start playing with the steering wheel and then call me back after you do that."

SS – "You know, we are all on the same page because I think you know we certainly want to be on the same page as you, that's the whole thing here, and it's obvious why he didn't want to test drive the vehicle and I have had a talk with James about the very good points that you have mentioned and what I am....

[redacted]– "Maam, they never would have involved him (if there were not a serious problem), the technicians at first said there was a problem. Do you know that Virginia took an E-150 out herself? Not like mine and said the same thing (that therew were control issues like my van). Do you know she said it has a problem we are calling in the engineer? She wanted me to drive with her. I said Virginia, I don't have to. Take it (my van) out and drive it yourself."

SS – "..... but I think from right now, setting aside the steering with the cargo van the 2011 cargo van, I think it is, for some reason you know with both times I have talked with James and I talked to Virginia I always get the feeling that they do not feel 100% confident in what it is that you reported. They said the customer has mentioned that he does feel a sway. Now we have noticed a wandering .... with other vehicles that could be normal."

[redacted]– "Well, maam the wandering....

SS – " I didn't get the feeling that they are confident with the fact that they are on the same page with what you are saying."

[redacted]– "Well maam, here it is. No, they know, they know. They have been scared (scared of the body roll on my van), all of them have been scared. All right?"

SS – "I will certainly mention ....to Virginia when I speak with her because that wasn't the ...

[redacted]– "Well maam, what we are doing here, we are evolving into a cover-up and they are going to try and justify and rationalize that since all the other vans are working this way that I should accept the fact that my van is working unsafely and it is okay. That's what we are trying to do h ere. Now, I don't care about these other vans, I care about the one I purchased. I have five experts lined up and they are all specialists in suspensions. Virginia isn't, Downtown Ford isn't, they do these things nationally. Do you know if you look up on the Internet the E-150 and some of the lighter weight RV's use the E-150, do you know this is a horrible problem? You ought to look at the email strings."

SS – "You know, what else I do share is that is I need to speak with a technical subject matter expert. He is constantly discussing current trends that they see with vehicles...

[redacted]– "You need to give him my 13-page letter that I sent Virginia."

SS – "I certainly will do that…

[redacted] – "Now, let me clarify one other thing. Wandering, the word wandering, the word body roll, okay, and sway. I am kind of using them all in the same way. Everybody has used these different terms."

SS – "Right".

[redacted] – "Alright what it is, it is all the same. It is body roll where because the body has been raised higher up, wind can get underneath it and because it is higher up like on stilts, it is going to be more sensitive. The wind, this expert told me the way it is designed it cannot deflect the wind like the other models did. The wind is pushing the body and the platform underneath is staying the same. Because when all of these things were done in combination, the tires, 10-ply. Do you know what 10-ply is? Used to be tires were 2-ply. It doesn't move it is not forgiving. They used a beefier spring and raised the body up even higher. I took a tape measure. It is 3 inches higher. You know at Nascar if they raise that car one inch above the asphalt if they raise it two inches they will go crashing into the walls. Have you ever seen crashes into the walls? That's because of suspension issues like I am talking to you about. Those race cars. You talk to the race car crews and they will tell you all about it. So what we have is, they made some changes and they changed the sway bar, it is undersized and it is attached wrong. You still haven't answered my question about walking. You find an engineer and ask him if it is okay if a sway bar walks left to right and crashes up against the right side of the van and makes metal contact. Will you find that out for me please, because I can't find a technician that says that's normal. Although Virginia said it was normal but Virginia doesn't have the credentials to make that statement. This is why it looks like it is a cover up to me because no one has come back to me and told me why my bushing is cracked, why the sway bar has shifted to the right when it is supposed to come back in home position. It is because it can't handle the back and forth sway, the van went to the right and the sway bar stayed there. They (sway bars) are not supposed to walk, it is called walking and that's a no-no in the industry. Okay?"

SS – "Okay. I'll go ahead and discuss that with them and of course I am going to go ahead and get your fax from Virginia but in order for us to address this issue – I totally agree with you with regards to steering …unit and why you feel that wouldn't make any sense,

[redacted] – "Right, because

SS – "I want to see if we can schedule a test drive with you because you know I am going to go ahead and explain this to the field service engineer and to Virginia as again I did get the impression that they did feel something but not really confident in ….

[redacted] – "Maam, maam I told you what it is and I don't need a cover up from you I want you to be honest and I want you to check these things out, okay and no I want you to be honest

because you know what's going to happen? There is going to be a massive recall here if we don't get in line. Because we have an engineer that says this is inherent in all of these E-150 platforms. I am trying to get away from that and I think if you all were smart you would get away from that too, you hit it right on the head, if I bought and I admire you for this, if I bought a towing package and I have a passenger van, it's got to do both (work together) without body roll. The packages are supposed to work in unison with each other."

SS – "Well I did want to, what I am saying is, like I said I am not technically inclined, I am not in a position to comment on anything technical. I just want that to be clear. I wanted to make sure I got all the information that you have stated and of course I am going to get the fax from Virginia so that we can…

[redacted] – "Now there

SS – "Could you wait a second, excuse me, and really thoroughly understand what it is that you, you know what you are trying to say and the point you are trying to make, which they do make sense…

[redacted] "Maam, why would I want to test drive an E-150 van,

SS – "But [redacted]

[redacted] – "That they said there are body roll characteristics, I know that. It's happening in mine. Why do I need to go out on a ride for that?"

SS – "But that's not all we want to do [redacted] I think again, you know, I am sure the field service engineer just wants to ride with you so you can point out and show….

[redacted] – "Maam, they have already taken it (my van) out three times. They have taken it out four times, all of them have."

SS – "But if, we are asking….

[redacted] – "Maam, are you asking me to take an unsafe vehicle out…

SS – "We are requesting ….

[redacted] – "Maam, are you asking me

SS – " ?

[redacted] – "Maam it is passing it (my information in the 13-page fax) on to the right people. That's all.

SS – "Okay, are you refusing to test drive the vehicle with us? That's what we want to do

[redacted] – " Maam, maam I am telling you that it is unsafe and I am not going to take it above 50 mph because it is unsafe.

SS – "That's something that needs to be

[redacted] – "Now are you saying it is a safe vehicle?"

SS – "I am not saying anything, I am just .....

[redacted] "Maam, maam we need to get some experts in here beyond the dealership. They (the dealership) can't handle this issue."

SS – "The person beyond the dealership is the field service engineer. He is the ...

[redacted] – "Maam, maam, he is not a suspension specialist."

SS – "?

[redacted] – "Maam, I have had five specialists tell me it is too dangerous to drive."

SS – "I hear what you are saying and I am not trying to say that their assessment is valid you know...

[redacted] – "You need to get a specialist to drive it maam, a suspension specialist from Ford."

SS – "[redacted], the field service engineer I just want to let you know that he is the highest point of technical escalation for the dealership when....

[redacted] – "Maam, he doesn't know anything about suspensions, he used a 2010 Service Bulletin. My model is a 2011."

SS – "[redacted] you know I have listened to you, I have allowed for you to explain your points, you are not allowing me to speak,

[redacted] – "Get the information, absorb it, send it to the right people and get back to me.

SS – "Need to speak with field service engineer....

[redacted] – "Get back to me, we'll talk about it. Get it to the right people. It was a pleasure talking to you maam, have a good day."