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



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, DC 20590

August 19, 2011

The Honorable Jo Bonner
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
1302 North McKenzie Street
Foley, AL 36535

NVS-216 et
Ref. No. 10415676

Dear Congressman Bonner:

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wrote concerning his sister and brother-in-law's model year (MY) 1989 Lincoln Town Car. Your letter was received by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation.

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 motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect may exist. 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. In his letter, he indicated that his sister sold an MY 1989 Lincoln Town Car to his other sister in 1997. The vehicle exhibited electrical problems with the ignition switch. When the engine is started, the ignition switch does not remain in the run position and the engine shuts off. [REDACTED] learned that MY 1989 Lincoln Town Cars were recalled for this problem in 1996. His sister, who was the first owner, advised that she was unaware of the 1996 recall campaign, and did not experience any ignition switch problems. [REDACTED] indicated that there have been five recalls on this vehicle, and that an incomplete recall is causing the ignition switch problems. He was subsequently told by a local Ford/Lincoln garage that there are no recalls on this vehicle.

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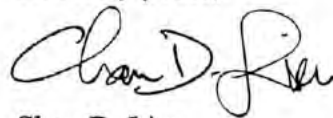
The Honorable Jo Bonner

The recall campaign [REDACTED] refers to (NHTSA Safety Recall Campaign No. 96V-071, summary enclosed), involves the replacement of the ignition switch. This could cause an internal short circuit, and result in a fire in the steering column in certain MY 1988 through MY 1989 Lincoln Town Car vehicles. His sister's vehicle was possibly excluded from NHTSA Safety Recall Campaign No. 96V-071 for one of the following reasons: 1) some vehicles were built prior to a supplier manufacturing process change; 2) some vehicles have a low electrical load through the ignition switch; or 3) some vehicles were equipped with ignition switches that are of a completely different design. A search of Ford's website using the VIN provided in your letters shows no open recalls.

In addition, we reviewed our database in an effort to identify whether other similar safety defect trends exist to the electrical system. We found no indication that a defect trend exists, other than the aforementioned ignition switch recall. Therefore, we are not opening a safety defect investigation and have no plans to expand the scope of the recall to include additional vehicles. We recommend that [REDACTED] and his brother-in-law continue to work with Ford, a dealer or an independent repair facility to resolve their problem.

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

Sincerely yours,



Chan D. Lieu
Director, Governmental Affairs,
Policy and Strategic Planning

Enclosure

cc: Washington Office