

NHTSA ccmMercury Routing Slip



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Delivery: MESSENGER ENV.

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Address To: DOT/I

Referred By: NPO-011

Doc Date: 8/5/2011

Due Date: 8/26/2011

S10 #:

DOT/I #: 2011-2068

RMP #:

Subject: LETTER FROM CONGRESSMAN WALZ OM BEHALF OF CONSTITUENT, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] RE SUDDEN UNCONTROLLED ACCELERATION OF A TOYOTA COROLLA AUTOMOBILE
DOT/I#2011-2068

Ack Date:

Sign Office: DIR. GOVT.

AFFAIRS

Cleared Date:

File Loc:

Added By: BMILLINGS x65470

Ack By:

Signature: CHAN LIEU

Cleared By:

XREF File:

Modified By:

BERNADETTE.MILLINGS

Signed For:

Cleared For:

Closed Date:

Most Recent Comment:

Author:

The Honorable TIMOTHY J WALZ
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

Tel: Fax: **E-mail:**

CL-10420272-9653

Assigned To	Task	Asgn Date	Deadline	Returned Date
NVS-200	REPLY	8/12/2011	8/26/2011	
NVS-010	INFORMATION	8/12/2011		8/12/2011
I	INFORMATION	8/12/2011		8/12/2011

RECEIVED - NHTSA

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

**INFORMATION Redacted PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)**

NIM
08/16/2011
LB

11-Aug-11

2011 House Report - Governmental Affairs (I-10) Correspondence Control Sheet - Room W85-328

Control Number: 2011 — 2068
Date DOT Received: 8/11/2011
Date DOT Entered: 8/11/2011
Member's Date:
Member Last Name: Walz
Member First Name: Timothy J.
Member Organization Member, U.S. House of Representatives
Address1: 1134 7th Street, NW
Address2:
City: Rochester
State: MN
Zip: 55901
Constituent File Name: [REDACTED]
Constituent Date:
Action Office: National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration
Subject: her Toyota Corolla
Due Date: 8/26/2011
Action Office Code: NHTSA
Member Contact: Mark Krogmann
Pending: Yes
Member Contact Phone: (507) 388-2149
Closed Date:
Remarks:
Direct Reply/Comeback Copy: Yes
Congressional Affairs Contact: Maria Harrison at (202) 366-4573

ES11-005287

CAPITOL OFFICE:
1722 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2472

MANKATO OFFICE:
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MANKATO, MN 56001
(507) 388-2149

ROCHESTER OFFICE:
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TIMOTHY J. WALZ
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
FIRST DISTRICT, MINNESOTA
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2011-2012

AGRICULTURE
Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research
General Farm Commodities and
Risk Management
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
Economic Development, Public Buildings, and
Emergency Management
Highways and Transit
Rail, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials

VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Oversight

August 5, 2011

Robert Letteney
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Letteney,

I am writing on behalf of my constituent, [REDACTED] regarding a letter she sent to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) about sudden uncontrolled acceleration of a Toyota Corolla automobile.

[REDACTED] reports that she sent NHTSA a letter describing a terrifying incident in which her Toyota Corolla acted bizarrely and began to accelerate uncontrollably without any issues involving a floor mat or driver error. She expected to receive some sort of response from NHTSA confirming that they had heard and understood her concerns. To her dismay she has not received a response. Please review the attached copy of the letter [REDACTED] sent to NHTSA in June, 2011 for her complete account of what occurred.

I respectfully request that you provide my office with information about NHTSA's response to uncontrolled acceleration concerns and whether NHTSA has received and processed [REDACTED] letter. It is my hope that I will be able to reply to my constituent and assure her that NHTSA has heard and reacted to her concerns.

Please direct your response or any questions you may have to Mark Krogmann in my Mankato District Office. Mark can be reached at (507)388-2149 or mark.krogmann@mail.house.gov. Thank you again for your time and attention to this matter

Sincerely,

Tim Walz
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

TJW/mk

Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236 (1-888-DASH-2-DOT) Written correspondence should be addressed to the Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance NSA-10, NHTSA HQ, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590

Re: Sudden Uncontrolled Acceleration 2003 Toyota Corolla 4D EEL VIN No. JTDBR38E132 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Slayton MN [REDACTED]

I was traveling north on 169 June 20, 2011 at the posted speed limit, when the sign indicated a reduced speed zone ahead. The radio and CD player were off and I never use the cell phone while driving. I reduced my speed to the posted limit by pressing down on the cruise control so that when I got to the new speed limit I was traveling at the new posted speed at any time there was a change in the speed limit. There were trucks in the right lane ahead of me, so I moved over to use the left lane. It was rainy. I was approaching the "Prepare to stop when lights are flashing" sign before the intersection of Webster and Minnesota 169 when the yellow lights began to flash. My foot was not on the gas because I was using the cruise control. I checked around me and then I began my stop. I was aware that when I began to brake I had plenty of time to do a safe stop but as I tried to brake, the car was moving faster than it should be. I was aware of a very loud noise. I had to press harder and harder on the brake. I like coming to a controlled stop with a gradual slow down and not a sudden stop but instead of slowing down the car was not slowing down normally. It felt like the car suddenly was trying to go faster and it was resisting the stop. I was pushing harder and harder on the brake as the sound around me grew louder. I could feel and hear the ABS working. The ABS sounded like a high pitch noise and very fast pulsing. I don't generally have to use a hard brake so I noted the ABS mentally. I came to a complete stop before going through the intersection of Webster and MN 169 which had a red light now but the engine was roaring. I shifted down to 1 and/or 2 and the car shuddered; I tried to shift up to Park but as I got to R (reverse) the car tried to buck back so I put it in Neutral and turned off the car. The car was silent but I kept my foot firmly on the brake. I looked over to the car in the right lane which is to my right. The woman in the car was looking at me obviously alarmed with her eyes very large and her mouth open. I put my emergency lights on but I remained seated in the car because it doesn't seem safe for me to get out. The light turned green and the traffic proceeded around me. I turned on the engine in neutral to test the car and it sounded normal. There was no traffic in front, behind or beside me in any lane going north or turning into my path so I put the car into Drive. The car was acting normally. The traffic on Webster still had a red light so I drove across the intersection onto the right shoulder. I think I put the car from Drive to Neutral to listen to it. I began to drive when there was no traffic around and the car continued to act normally. I stayed about 10 miles below the posted limit at that point. I tried to keep more than ample space between me and any car in front of me, when I was passed by other cars. The car acted well although I did not use the cruise control at all at this point. I stopped at the Food Coop in St. Peter to call

the dealership. I tried to describe the problem as clearly and precisely as I could. I was abruptly interrupted when I stated that I had been using my cruise control and I was told that this problem has nothing to do with cruise control. I was trying to meticulously focus on and describe each and every detail that led up to the uncontrolled racing of the engine when I was interrupted. This made it difficult to describe any clues that led up to this incident. I was told to go check the car floor mats immediately. It was raining really hard so I put the cell in my pocket and when I got to the car I asked the group of people in the car next to me to verify that the pad was in place and asked them to note that it was hooked. I found out later that June 19, 2011, the night before I left Slayton MN to travel to Minneapolis, my spouse Herbert Michael Heidkamp had noted that the driver floor mat was in the proper place and hooked when he cleaned the inside and outside of all the windows. I wanted to be focused in case the event occurred again so I took a break to use the bathroom, buy some coffee (for when I got to the dealership), call my spouse to tell him a few details about what happened and my intent to go to the dealership. The car started and drove normally. I drove with lots of space between me and the car ahead, but slightly below the speed limit. I did not use the cruise control. The dealership did a routine car check and checked the gas pedal controls. I asked for an agreement that they were going to notify and work with their corporate head quarters to solve this problem but they would not put this in writing. I paid the bill for the checks they did. The dealer manager indicated that the Toyota Company has always determined that the source of this problem was the driver side floor mat, and driver error, although he stated he was not saying that I had made any driver errors. I have been driving for 42 years and the conclusion I make is that the source of the problem has not been identified or fixed.

[REDACTED] (original dated 6-26-11)

[REDACTED] 7/18/11