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Henrico, VA [REDACTED]

October 10, 2012

Mr. Randy Reid, Chief  
Correspondence Research Division  
Office of Defects Investigation Enforcement  
National Highway Transportation Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: No 10448267

Dear Mr. Reid,

I am in receipt of your correspondence dated October 2, 2012.

While I certainly understand the NHTSA's role in protecting our Nation's highways, I encourage you and your staff to take a broader look at electric/ electronic power steering systems. As I have done considerable research on these systems since experiencing first-hand the issues with electric / electronic steering systems on the 2011 Toyota Highlander, I honestly believe the minimal benefits of increased fuel economy these systems provide do not come close to outweighing the increased failures and safety risks presented by these seriously flawed systems.

These systems are fundamentally flawed in design, performance and reliability. These are the very items the NHTSA is responsible for overseeing. A search of the NHTSA website reveals an alarming number of complaints, investigations and recalls from all manufacturers using electric / electronic power steering systems. A simple Google search opens thousands of discussions on many websites of people experiencing issues with electric/ electronic power steering systems. The comments range from drifting and the need to constantly redirect the path of the vehicle, total system failures, inconsistent tightness, and intermitting failures, such as I experienced on the 2011 Highlander. Sadly, dealers and manufacturers are unable to determine the cause in many of these cases and the consumer is being told there is nothing wrong and allowing the vehicle to remain on the road.

Reviews of cars by industry publications and professionals have described steering on vehicles with electric/ electronic steering as "vague, numb, unresponsive, and uninspiring." Other comments by professional reviewers include "does not give adequate road feedback," "There is better steering control on my John Deer".

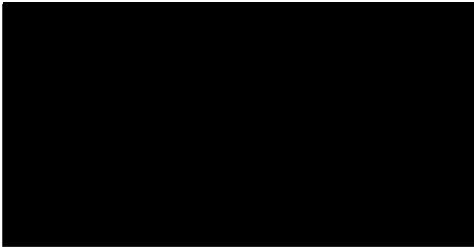
I have read many stories where the "brake malfunction" light is illuminated on the dash and there is no steering or brakes and the owner is told by the dealer they could not find the problem. No repairs are done and the defective vehicle is put back on the road, only to fail again, continuing to endanger lives.

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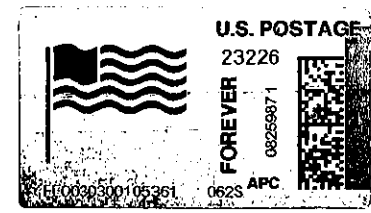
These systems not only create a danger to the occupants of the vehicle, but anyone around the vehicle when the steering fails as the driver has limited control. These systems are endangering the lives of everyone on our Nation's highways. Safety is important to all consumers. And as a consumer, I will never purchase another vehicle with electric/ electronic steering again. They simply do not function properly and are extremely unsafe.

Of course traditional hydraulic systems have failed in the past as well. The difference being in a hydraulic system, anyone could actually see the broken belt or the system leaked fluid, or a bearing has gone bad. With electric/ electronic systems, this is not possible and the defective vehicle is put back on the road.

I encourage the NHTSA to "step up" and take action to resolve the issues being encountered with electric / electronic steering.



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