U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

February 3, 2014

[redacted]
Mount Vernon, NH [redacted]

NVS-216 am
Ref. No. 10543725

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your correspondence concerning your Model Year (MY) 2003 Chevrolet Silverado. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) received your correspondence. We regret any inconvenience our delay in responding may have caused you.

NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns. 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 trend may exist. We do not have authority to act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

You state on two occasions you experienced a safety hazard in your MY 2003 Chevrolet Silverado due to hydraulic brake line failures. You consider this a major safety problem and the costs to replace the brake lines are expensive. However, a dealer told you the brake line corrosion is considered normal wear and tear for a vehicle of this age. You feel that two brake line failures are excessive and you would like to see an investigation into this problem.

On January 5, 2011, ODI opened an Engineering Analysis (EA11-001, resume enclosed) based on a petitioner's request for an investigation. The alleged problem is severe corrosion can cause brake lines to rupture resulting in a sudden reduction in brake effectiveness in MY 1999 through MY 2003 General Motors pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles that were sold or currently registered in salt belt States. However, the investigation is continuing and no determinations have been reached at this time. The information you provided has been entered into our database. It will be considered with any future reports as part of our investigation. The NHTSA investigation and recall process is on our web site at www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/recalls/recallprocess.cfm. Also, you should continue to monitor our web site at www.safecar.gov for future updates to our investigation.

Should you encounter a safety-related problem with a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment in the future, we would appreciate it if you would complete an electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire online at www.nhtsa.gov or call the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236. Also, a summary listing of vehicle owners' complaints, safety recalls, manufacturers' service bulletins, etc. can be obtained at our web site.

Sincerely,

Randy Reid, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement

Enclosure

U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
NHTSA
Authentic US Government Information
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Uses a digital certificate to ensure the content has remained unchanged

Investigation: EA 11-001
Prompted by:
Date Opened: 01/05/2011
Investigator: Chris Lash **Reviewer:** Jeff Quandt
Approver: Richard Boyd
Subject: Brake line corrosion failure

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: GENERAL MOTORS CORP.
Products: 1999-2003 GM C/K pickup trucks and SUVs in Salt Belt states
Population: 1,770,000 (Estimated)

Problem Description: Brake line corrosion allegedly can result in rupture during brake application, resulting in sudden reduction of brake effectiveness.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	519	277	761**
Crashes/Fires:	13	15	26**
Injury Incidents:	2	1	3
Number of Injuries:	2	1	3
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	538	538

***Description of Other:** Warranty claims related to brake line leakage.

** Count indicates duplicate reports received by ODI and manufacturer.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: An Engineering Analysis has been opened.

Summary:

The Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) received Defect Petition DP10-003 on March 2, 2010, requesting the investigation of model year (MY) 2003 Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD 4WD pickup trucks for corrosion failures of the vehicle brake lines. DP10-003 was granted and on March 30, 2010, Preliminary Evaluation PE10-010 was opened on more than six million model year 1999 through 2003 light trucks and sport utility vehicles manufactured and sold by General Motors Corporation (GM). On July 2, 2010, ODI received GM's response to an information request, which included GM's assessment of the frequency and safety consequences of the alleged defect. GM stated that: (1) the brake system of the subject vehicles is split front/rear and should a brake pipe suddenly fail for any reason, the affected vehicle would be capable of stopping with the pressure supplied by the remaining circuit; (2) the subject vehicles were designed to meet the hydraulic circuit partial failure requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards 105 and 135, Light Vehicle Brake Systems; and (3) should a brake fluid leak occur for any reason, the brake system malfunction indicator lamp (MIL) would illuminate and warn the driver before the brake fluid level was low enough to cause a loss of line pressure.

Of the 890 total complaints for brake pipe corrosion identified, 761 were located in Salt Belt states (Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and Wisconsin). The complaint rate per 100,000 vehicles sold is significantly higher in the Salt Belt, 43.0, compared with 3.0 for the remaining states. In approximately 25 percent of the complaints, the brake pipe failure has allegedly occurred suddenly, with no warning to the driver (i.e., no brake warning light), and resulted in extended stopping distances. In 26 of these incidents, the increase in stopping distance that resulted was alleged as a factor in a crash

and in 10 others the vehicle was intentionally steered off the road or into another lane of travel in order to avoid a crash.

An Engineering Analysis has been opened for subject vehicles sold or currently registered in Salt Belt states to further assess the scope, frequency and safety risks associated with sudden failures of corroded brake pipes that can result in decreased brake effectiveness. ODI will continue to gather information on subject vehicles outside the Salt Belt as well.