

August 20, 2014

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

Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
West Building
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Inadequate Cabin Heat in Winter, 2012 Nissan Sentra

FIRST FOLLOW-UP

AUG 27 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I wrote to your office on July 30, 2014 and detailed a defect in the heating system in our 2012 Nissan Sentra. Specifically, when the outside temperature is approximately 15 degrees or colder, the engine does not reach normal operating temperature for an extended period, resulting in an uncomfortable and potentially unsafe cabin. I am enclosing a copy of that July 30 letter to provide you with the full background and details of the matter, including ownership information, vehicle identification number, etc. As I noted in that letter, I believe Nissan North America, Inc., has been very unresponsive to my concerns.

I am writing to you now to provide additional information, as a result of Nissan North America, Inc. *finally* contacting me by telephone about my case, which has been assigned a case number by Nissan of 14870623. In summary, this is Nissan's response:

- The condition I described has been noted in other Nissan Sentra's but this is how the engine has been designed.
- They cannot re-design the engine to correct the matter¹.
- They don't believe that there is really anything wrong.
- They refused to provide me a letter, or any other form of tangible documentation, setting forth their findings and conclusions about the case.

I must tell you that I was astounded by their response! Nissan would have you believe that a cold automobile cabin on a cold day reflects nothing wrong, not any sort of design defect that the manufacturer has any obligation to correct. That is truly absurd. This is 2014, not the early 1900's; automotive heating and air conditioning systems have been top notch for many years, and virtually all properly maintained vehicles on the road today will keep their passengers comfortable notwithstanding the outside weather conditions. But not the Nissan Sentra!

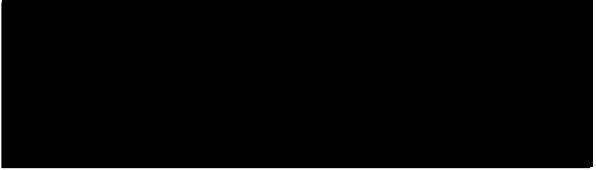

As I stated in my July 30 letter, I believe there is a basic design flaw with the engine in this vehicle. I believe Nissan should acknowledge that defect and begin steps to correct the problem.

¹ Despite my repeated attempts, the Nissan representative refused to agree that the more accurate statement would have been that Nissan WILL NOT redesign the engine, as opposed to her claim that they CANNOT do so.

ET
9814
JMD

I believe the vehicle in its current state of design presents a potential health and safety risk, particularly if the motorist is stranded on a cold winter day. Failure to reach proper engine temperature also accelerates wear in the engine. Moreover, based on my communications with the dealer and with the manufacturer, I believe this is not an isolated problem but affects potentially thousands of similar Nissan vehicles. I therefore urge you to investigate the matter, especially in light of Nissan's total denial of responsibility. Thank you very much. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Cedar Rapids, Iowa 

Enclosure: copy of my July 30, 2014 letter to your agency.

July 30, 2014

Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
West Building
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Inadequate Cabin Heat in Winter, 2012 Nissan Sentra

To Whom It May Concern:

Owner name, address, and telephone number:

[REDACTED]
Cedar Rapids, Iowa [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Vehicle identification number

3N1AB6AP5CL [REDACTED]

Date of purchase:

March 6, 2012

Odometer reading, time of original complaint:

31,827

Current odometer reading:

36,075

Dealer's name and address:

Dave Wright Nissan Subaru
1900 51st Street, N.E.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

Nature of defect: My wife and I noticed this past winter (which was an especially cold one in Iowa) that our 2012 Nissan Sentra does not warm up to normal operating temperature on a timely basis when the outside temperature is roughly 15 degrees or colder. Instead, the coolant temperature gauge moves about 1/3 of the way up (normal is 1/2 way up) and just stays there for an extended period of 20 or more minutes. As a result, the heater puts out only minimally warm air. Eventually the car fully warms up and the heater output is normal. The car is unpleasant to drive in this condition and could pose a health and safety problem if we were stranded on a cold winter day. Moreover, the engine's failure to reach proper operating temperature in the proper amount of time will likely lead to premature engine wear.

Communication with dealer: **The dealer is aware that this is a problem with this model/year vehicle but is unable to correct the problem and has not received any technical advice or assistance from Nissan North America, Inc.** Let me say a word about my dealer: I have been doing business with this dealership (and its predecessor, Jim Miller Nissan) for over 28 years. I've purchased 5 new and 4 used vehicles from them and do all my service work there. They are honest, competent, and professional. I am completely confident that if they were able to remedy the problem, they would.

Communication with manufacturer: In summary, in my opinion Nissan North America, Inc., has been very unresponsive. I first provided notice to them of the problem in a letter dated March 17, 2014. They did not respond to that communication so I wrote another letter on May 10, 2014. They then responded telephonically and told me I needed to have the car checked out by my dealer. I did, on May 21, 2014. Of course, the dealership could not then find a problem because the air temperature was by this time much warmer, far above the 15 degrees when the problem surfaces. Had Nissan made a timely response to my March 17 letter, I'm confident the dealer would have been able to replicate the problem. I received no communication from Nissan after the dealer checked out the vehicle, so I wrote another letter on June 24, 2014. I finally got a telephonic response from the Consumer Affairs Department of Nissan North America, Inc., and was at that time assigned a case number: **14870623**. I have since been trying to contact Nissan's representatives to get an update of my case but to no avail. ***Specifically, over the course of the period July 3 through July 18, I called the number they provided each day, usually two times per day.*** I got return calls to my calls on some occasions, but it was never at a time when I was home. I also gave them my cell phone number but they never called that number. They have not attempted to contact me at all over the course of the last two weeks

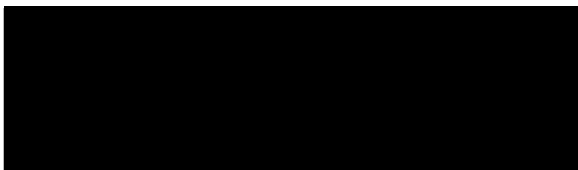
I believe, and I infer from my dealer that they believe, there is a basic design flaw with the engine in this vehicle which results in the inadequate and improper warm-up of the engine in very cold weather conditions. I believe Nissan should acknowledge this fact and make whatever design/engineering changes are necessary to remedy the problem.

I have been unable to resolve the problem with the manufacturer and am therefore requesting that you begin an investigation into the matter. Based on the dealer's comments, this is not an isolated problem but affects many, many other Nissan Sentra owners.

I am enclosing a copy of my most recent communication with the Consumer Affairs Department of Nissan North America, Inc., and would be happy to provide you copies of the other letters I've written, as described above, should you so desire them.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Cedar Rapids, Iowa 

Cedar Rapids, Iowa



CEDAR R

21 AUG

7014 1820 0000 4623 4020

RETURN RECEIPT
REQUESTED

W48-225

Office of Defect
National Highw
1200 New Jerse
West Building
Washington, D.

DOT Mailroom

TO: W48- 226

Building: DOT

Mailstop: 4 West

Route Sym: NVS-200,210,300,01

external carrier: Certified

Sender:

Manufacturer:

Purchase Order:

Item 1 of 1



7014182000046234020

IM 75 00 TT 4107/07 70