

T&C dangerous condition.txt

October 21, 2015

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

Chrysler Group Customer Care
PO Box 21-8004
Auburn Hills, MI 48321-8004

Hurley Chrysler Dodge Jeep
2173 S. Woodland Blvd
DeLand, FL 32720
Attn: Mr. Brendan Hurley

US Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Progressive American Insurance Co.
AJ Enterprises-Agent
PO Box 350978
Palm Coast, FL 32135

NOV -4 2015

Subject: Dangerous design of Chrysler Town & Country air intake ducting
Re: Recent "Hydrolocking" of my 2014 T&C engine VIN 2C4RC1BG5ER [REDACTED]

Dear Sirs:

The purpose of this letter is to point out a very dangerous condition on the 2014 Chrysler Town & Country and perhaps other Chrysler models. This dangerous condition is a result of the seemingly poor design of the engine air inlet ducting whose entrance opening is located behind the grille and only 19" above ground level. This location acts as a ground water "scoop" with a potential to disable the vehicle and cause a dangerous road condition.

Recently I was driving during a heavy rain storm when I came to a backed-up storm drain. The vehicles in front of me passed thru the puddle without difficulty. Directly in front of me was a large pickup truck whose water "backwash" entered my air intake and immediately my engine stalled and would not restart. I had to have a tow truck remove my vehicle from the scene. While "stranded", awaiting the tow truck, my wife and I were immobilized and in peril from vehicles behind us, those passing around us through the puddle and those approaching from the opposite direction. At any time any one of those vehicles could have rear-ended and/or otherwise struck my vehicle.

I later had the vehicle taken to Hurley Chrysler in DeLand for inspection and repair where it was determined that my engine had "hydrolocked". It seems that the dealership had encountered this condition before since they had a term for it. This leads me to believe that my problem was not an isolated one and perhaps a "money-maker" for the dealership and Chrysler since Hurley's quote for an engine replacement was over \$9,200!

Fortunately my Progressive comprehensive insurance covered such damage. To reduce costs Progressive elected to locate and have Hurley install a "used" engine which took some three (3) weeks. During this three week wait time I was without a vehicle because Hurley had no courtesy car program nor did they have rentals available.

After the "used" engine was installed it would not start and Hurley finally determined that the starter also had water damage and required replacement. This was a further delay of several days and causes one to wonder why this condition was not uncovered during the initial inspection. Because Hurley had no starter in stock and could not locate one I was told that there was a "national backlog" for this starter. I then personally did an internet search and found quite a few starters available. I relayed this information to Hurley's service department and they eventually located and installed a refurbished starter.

When my vehicle was finally repaired and turned over to me I was told that since a "used" engine had been installed my vehicle drive train warranty was voided.

Since this dangerous "hydrolock" condition happened to me I now consider the vehicle unsafe and am reluctant to drive it during and after a rain. This is especially dangerous when driving at night during/after a rain on a narrow two-lane road. When one encounters a puddle the tendency is to swerve to avoid it and with oncoming traffic this could lead to a head-on collision. There are myriads of scenarios that can be presented including a disabled "hydrolocked" car with children stranded on a dark country road or even on a high-speed interstate highway after having run through a water puddle and subject to being collided with.

I have several complaints regarding Chrysler and the Hurley dealership. My Chrysler complaint is due to the questionable dangerous placement of the engine air intake ducting opening. I believe that this situation should be reviewed and a proper redesign and recall be initiated.

As for the Hurley dealership I was both bemused and discouraged to find that they have no courtesy/rental policy for customers undergoing long term major repairs.

Furthermore I find it unbelievable that neither Chrysler nor Hurley have replacement starters available for a popular vehicle such as the Town & Country. This situation should be addressed and proper stocking be accomplished.

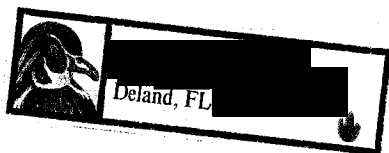
I hereby request that the NHTSA work with Chrysler to determine how many other Chrysler vehicles are being placed in peril due to the design of the air intake ducting and how many previously unexplained collisions have taken place in rainy weather.

Although I don't expect to ever need to use my power train warranty I would like to know why it has been voided by this engine swap and why Chrysler would not provide the remainder of my original 100,000 mile warranty.

Please be advised that I have reported this design condition on the NHTSA on-line complaint forum (www.safercar.gov). I feel that since this mini-van is so popular with families all present and potential owners should immediately be made aware of this potentially dangerous condition. Hopefully I will receive a positive response to my concerns.

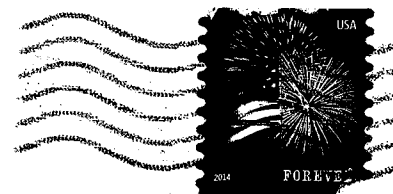
Respectfully,

DeLand, FL



ORLANDO FL 328

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Dept of Transportation
NHTSA
1200 NEW JERSEY ST
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