

CL-10894997-9826

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

[Redacted]
Brownstown, MI [Redacted]
August 11, 2016

Complaint # 10894997

Cynthia Glass
U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

AUG 22 2016

Dear Ms. Glass,

Previous Recall # 14E052000

On 7/23/2016, while on vacation, the spring hanger bracket on the driver's rear of my 2016 Open Range 5th wheel camping trailer broke while I was driving 60 mph in Holbrook, AZ on I-40. This resulted in my two tires on the driver's side rubbing together and nearly causing a fire. After a 48 hour delay and many phone calls, a roadside repair company came to me and welded a new, stronger spring hanger bracket on at over \$500 cost to me. Exactly 7 days later, the rear spring hanger bracket on the passenger side of the trailer also broke off, this time in Doniphan, NE along I-80. This now caused the two tires on the passenger side to rub together and I believe destroy both tires as well. Again, many phone calls resulted in another roadside repair company coming to me and welding on a new stronger spring hanger on the passenger side for over \$500.

Upon returning home, I notified the trailer manufacturer (Open Range) and selling dealer (General RV in Brownstown, MI) of these two failures and submitted all documentation including photos of the broken hangers and copies off all receipts. Thus far, Open Range has not responded other than to say they are looking into it.

Today, while doing some research, I noticed NHTSA ordered a recall of these exact spring hangers by the maker of my trailer's frame and suspension (Lippert) in 2014 (#14E052000). I also have a copy of their letter to you listing their remedy. In addition, I've seen evidence that the frames themselves have failed in this same location as the spring hanger brackets. Therefore, I wanted to make you aware that there is still a major issue with Lippert and their spring hangers that are being installed on trailers. I have been told by both roadside repair companies and by my selling dealer that I'm very fortunate that my trailer did not flip over during either of these failures and that my truck did not flip with it. I'm also grateful that a Good Samaritan truck driver alerted me to the issue with my trailer as I was driving before my tires caught fire.

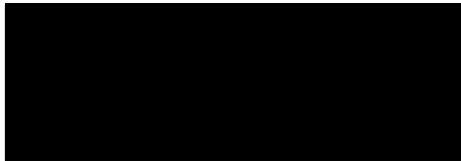
I would very much appreciate your looking into this situation to decide if further action needs to be taken to protect the owners of any trailers with these undersized spring hangers. Again, the roadside repair companies both indicated that the

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problem appears to be that all six of the installed hangers are of insufficient thickness to handle the lateral forces that a trailer of this size (42 feet long and UVW in excess of 13,000 lbs) imposes during any tight turns. I am still in possession of one of the broken spring hangers with the other one given to General RV in Brownstown, Mi. I also have photos of both broken hangers before any repairs were made that I could send you if you notify me of an email address that I can use.

I greatly appreciate your expertise in this matter, as I am afraid to tow this trailer anymore until all appropriate repairs are made (at a minimum, replacement of the remaining four OEM spring hangers and complete assessment of the leaf springs, equaflex and the frames themselves) and someone deems it to be safe to tow. Please feel free to contact me for any additional information and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely



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