

CC: NHTSA

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OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(6)

Dania Beach, FL

1119109-8263

July 18, 2018

Kia Motors America, Inc.
Attn: Seungkyu Yoon
111 Peters Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92606-1790

RE: 2013 Sorrento – VIN 5XYKT4A1XDG
Severe Engine Issues

Dear Mr. Yoon:

In January, 2017, my wife and I purchased the above referenced vehicle from your dealership in Coral Springs, FL. We recently experienced a total engine failure, and am writing to report a systematic failure by your company and local dealers concerning this incredibly severe issue. On April 3, my wife was driving in the city, with our [REDACTED] old, on our way to pick up our [REDACTED] old from school, when inexplicably, the car died in the middle of traffic. Luckily, she was able to coast into the parking lot of a business near downtown. The engine wouldn't restart, and she had to have the car towed home.

The next day, we had the car towed to the Gunther Kia dealership in Ft. Lauderdale. That afternoon, I received a call from their service department. They reported that the battery was dead, and the connector was corroded. They also reported that they didn't perform a full diagnostic because the car had no power, and to replace the battery and connector, it would cost around \$750. It is outrageous that the dealership would attempt to gouge such a price for such simple repair. And this is all before they even diagnose the real issue! I inquired for more information regarding the source of the issue, and the response was that the technicians hadn't "communicated with the vehicle" due to the lack of power. Further, they wanted \$130 for their so-called diagnostic, and would not release the vehicle without payment (which ended up being \$152.) It is also flabbergasting that the service department of your dealership did not have the wherewithal to connect the vehicle to an alternate power source in order to perform a proper diagnostic. Under extreme duress, I paid the fee and had the vehicle towed back home.

I was able to secure an independent mechanic to come and inspect the vehicle. He was able to determine that the issue was not the battery or electrical system. Rather, the engine had seized! He checked the fluids and radiator, and did not find anything amiss. Since we purchased the vehicle, we have had it serviced at regular intervals, the last time being just a couple of months prior. According to the schedule, the vehicle wasn't due for servicing until the end of April. The mechanic told us he suspected this was a manufacturer's defect as he had seen this issue before.

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On Monday, April 9, I contacted the Kia customer support. As we have had performed proper maintenance on the car, this is not an issue we should be experiencing. Further, the car only has around 70,000 miles. After researching the issue, we discovered that there have been rampant engine issues with many Kia models from that time frame. This includes recalls of engines, and countless warranty replacements. I spoke with your agent, who reported there were no active recalls. She would not provide any additional information about product issues affecting the car, and kept saying that the car needs to be taken to a dealer for diagnostic. Based on the apparent inability of Gunther Kia to perform a basic engine check, I had the car towed to Hollywood Kia.

As of today, three months later, the car is still at Hollywood Kia, and we have been provided no concrete information regarding the repairs. We have communicated several times with Kia Customer Care/Consumer Affairs. We have also followed-up numerous times with the dealer's service department, both by phone and in person. Each time, we are given a similar story, that they are waiting on an approval for something, or they are waiting on the new engine because there is such a backlog for this type of engine due to the defect, etc... Each time, we are given verbal confirmation that the repair is a covered event (either warranty or powertrain, or extended warranty, or engine defect), but the explanation is minimal. Both my wife and I have also received countless verbal confirmations that the problem did not stem from a maintenance issue. Disappointingly, although we have repeatedly asked, we have never received anything in writing.

I'm sure you can appreciate, that with two small children, the loss of use of the vehicle causes an immense hardship. Since this issue arose, I have been forced to rent cars, deal with loaners, and have lost the ability to plan anything in advance as we don't know what our vehicle situation may be next week. The dealer has had the car almost three months, and we are no closer to resolution.

We have been performing proper maintenance and service on the car since we bought it. This was explained to the dealer, and service records were provided. Based on the age and mileage of the car, the only explanation would be some sort of engine defect. This suspicion is confirmed by the overwhelming number of reports of similar inexplicable engine issue afflicting these cars. What makes it worse, is that your company and dealers purposefully seem to be hiding information, and being as obstructionist as possible regarding the source of the issue and repairing same.

This has been a complete quagmire of incidents concerning the vehicle. First, the unfair, deceptive, unscrupulous, and unconscionable actions by Gunther Kia. These actions resulted in the required ransom of the vehicle, based upon a supposed charge for an admittedly unperformed service. The fee charged by them should be refunded forthwith, along with any towing charges incurred. Second, the car has been at Hollywood Kia for three months, with no end in sight. While this is clearly a defect issue (which has been confirmed several times by the dealer's service department), that should be handled quickly, I suspect that efforts are being taken to cover-up the issue with the engine so as to mask any liability that may be imposed on your company and/or dealers.

If you would, please contact me with information and details regarding the engine issue with my car, the repair of the vehicle, and recoupment of the fees charged.

Further, please be advised that all rights and remedies at our disposal are expressly reserved, and that this letter should in no way be construed as a waiver of any claim or cause of action against your company, dealers, and agents. I am sharing this issue with the agencies and consumer reporting companies listed below.

Should you have any questions or concerns, or if any additional information is needed, please feel free to contact me at the address above, or by phone at [REDACTED].

Regards, /

[REDACTED]

CC:
Kia Motors America Consumer Affairs Dept
JD Powers & Assoc.
Consumer Reports
NHTSA

[Redacted]
Dania, FL [Redacted]



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