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Alamogordo, NM [REDACTED]  
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23 February 2019

Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.  
Customer CARE  
3800 Hamlin Road  
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Dear Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.:

I am the owner of a 2018 VW Passat SE TSI, VIN #1VWBA7A32JC [REDACTED] I am unhappy with two features that were part of the package when I bought the automobile: Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) and Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB). These items are advertised as "safey features." My experience thus far with both ACC and AEB is that they are "safety hazards," so much so, that I am advising National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) of these hazards.

My primary concern is that the ACC in general and the AEB in particular do not react to a situation the same way as I, the human driver, would react. Even on the "Very Close" setting for ACC, the AEB comes in too early to give the human driver a chance to change lanes to go around a slower vehicle, a turning vehicle, or a vehicle slowing to pull off of the roadway. I recognize that ACC and application of AEB is a function of vehicle speed, but in my opinion both operate too soon to give the human an opportunity to get from behind the slow, slowing, or turning vehicle ahead of him. The result is surprise, confusion, and wrong reaction by the human driver during the event as the AEB usurps control of the vehicle.

According to the Owner's Manual Forward Collision Warning (FCW) and its associated Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) are collectively called "Front Assist." Unlike the ACC/AEB operation, I have yet to encounter a situation in which "Front Assist" has actuated. I've seen neither an annunciator/alarm/alert in the Multifunction Indicator (MFI) nor felt AEB

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operation due to "Front Assist" as described in the Owner's Manual pages 262 to 267. Yes, going through "SETTINGS" ==> "ASSISTANTS" ==> "FRONT ASSIST" menus, I do have Active and Adv.warning and Dist.warning all checked. I'm not complaining loudly about no FCW/AEB operation because it likely would be as obnoxious and hazardous as ACC/AEB operation. I do find it strange, however, that my experience with FCW/AEB would be so different from ACC/AEB actuation.


And sadly, turning off "Front Assist" does not affect the operation (or as I'd hoped - no operation) of ACC/AEB. ACC/AEB and "Front Assist" appear to be unrelated. Once turned off manually, "Front Assist" does give a four second nuisance annunciator in the MFI and a four second respite repeatedly in the MFI. And I've discovered, "Front Assist" is reactivated upon starting the automobile after a shutdown, even though I would have intentionally deactivated it before the shutdown.

Another obnoxious occurrence while ACC is in operation is that the brakes are activated while going downhill. This would not only shorten brake pad life, but also heat up the rotors resulting in the possibility of warping. I discovered the brake operation going downhill while at night and noticing the brake light on the rear window deck was illuminated. Turning off ACC turned off brake operation. A person has to read between the lines of the Owner's Manual, page 261, to realize this is a built-in fault of the ACC operation. A normal, simple Cruise Control would not sacrifice the automobile's brake pads or rotors to maintain vehicle speed.

In my opinion the ACC/AEB safety hazards should be defeatable by the driver. In other words, the "Adaptive" function and AEB function should both be defeatable such that the vehicle resorts to a normal, standard Cruise Control operation that is not a hazard. They should also be permanently defeatable, not temporarily defeatable as I've discovered with "Front Assist." Reading and re-reading pages 252 to 261 of the Owner's Manual indicates the driver either lives with the hazard of ACC when switched on or does not ever dare use the Adaptive Cruise Control. This is an unsatisfactory choice, in my opinion. In my previous automobiles I have used Cruise Control in town and on the highway with no problems or frustrations as I've been experiencing with this ACC/AEB combination. I also opine that having the same capability to defeat FCW/AEB permanently would be of benefit, even though so far I've yet to experience a "Front Assist" operation or annunciator in the MFI.

My final act of desperation will be to remove the cowling from the back of the grill to pull the wiring harness out of the radar unit to eliminate the "Adaptive" portion of ACC to revert to normal Cruise Control. I do not know

if this would really work, and if a simple Cruise Control would result; I do not know if I would have a permanent nuisance annunciator in the MFI or if that annunciator would mask a genuine fault situation elsewhere or during a separate occasion. But, I intend to attempt this test in order to remove these safety hazards and operate with a simple Cruise Control that will not startle me with its illogical and unsafe operation.

Respectfully submitted, 

cc: NHTSA

cc: Sisbarro Autoworld, Inc.

cc: USAA Automobile Insurance

cc: Consumer Reports



Alamogordo, NM

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National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Vehicle Safety Complaint  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C.  
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