

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



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

October 1, 2019

The Honorable Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator
Attn: Julia Smith
210 West 2nd Street, Suite 806
Davenport, IA 52801

NEF-109 rrr
Ref. No. 11258110

Dear Senator Ernst:

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of your constituent [REDACTED] concerning his model year (MY) 2016 Winnebago Era 70 recreational vehicle (RV). I am pleased to respond.

NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's roadways. We monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns and can order manufacturers to recall and repair motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain safety defects in their design, construction, or performance.

The Takata air bag inflator recalls are the largest and most complex recalls in U.S. automotive history. These recalls include 19 vehicle manufacturers and currently include around 56 million inflators in approximately 41.6 million vehicles in the United States. In his letter, [REDACTED] indicates that he is still awaiting a replacement air bag for his Winnebago RV. His RV is built on a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis, and is affected by NHTSA Safety Recall 19V-003. That recall addresses a problem with frontal driver-side Takata air bag inflators in Mercedes-Benz and Freightliner Sprinter vans. In the event of a crash where the front driver-side air bag deploys, the inflator can explode.

To address this serious problem, NHTSA issued an amended Coordinated Remedy Order in December 2016, to order affected vehicle manufacturers to accelerate recall repairs and prioritize vehicles. This was structured to reduce the risk of rupture and protect the American public. The Order attaches a prioritization schedule for all vehicles currently affected by the recall, or that will become affected by future expansions, based upon known risk factors such as the age of the inflator, the geographic location of the inflator, and the location of the inflator in the vehicle.

The Honorable Joni Ernst

Mercedes-Benz was ordered to have repair parts available for MY 2016 Sprinter vans in Iowa by March 31, 2019.¹ However, due to delays in Mercedes-Benz's remedy part production and logistical issues, Mercedes-Benz requested an extension to December 31, 2019² to have parts available for these vehicles.

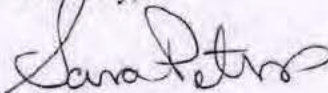
We understand [REDACTED] frustration. The agency continues to meet and communicate with Mercedes-Benz to remain informed about the supply status for vehicles such as [REDACTED] RV. We continue to convey the urgency of the situation so that [REDACTED] and other affected vehicle owners can receive a remedy part as quickly as possible.

When [REDACTED] receives a notification from Mercedes-Benz that parts are available, he should contact a local dealer to schedule a **free** repair immediately. In the event the dealership tells him that parts are not available after he is notified by Mercedes-Benz that parts are available, or after December 2019 given the extension request, NHTSA requests that [REDACTED] report that information to us, including the name of the dealership, names of employees with whom he spoke, the date and time of the contact with the dealership, and any other information he believes may be useful. He can report this information by calling NHTSA's Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236, or by filling out an online report following the Takata Recalls instructions at: <https://www-odi.nhtsa.gov/VehicleComplaint/>.

For the most up-to-date information on the Takata recalls, we encourage [REDACTED] to visit our website at www.nhtsa.gov/recall-spotlight/takata-air-bags. Further, we suggest that he check NHTSA's website at least twice per year for new safety recalls, by entering his Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) into our VIN Look-Up Tool.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-366-8849.

Sincerely,



Sara Peters
Deputy Director, Governmental Affairs,
Policy and Strategic Planning

cc: The Washington Office

¹ For reference, based on the Make, Model, Model Year, and location in Iowa, [REDACTED] MY 2016 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van is in Priority Group 10 in NHTSA's Coordinated Remedy Program.

² This extension request is available on NHTSA's website at:

https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/redacted_-_dvusa_extension_request_for_pg_10_psab_-_02.14.2019.pdf.