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U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, DC 20590

[redacted]
Berkeley Springs, WV [redacted]

NEF-109 nam
Ref. No. 11301996

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for the letter about model year (MY) 2015 Subaru Outback vehicle. Your letter was forwarded to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Office of Defects Investigation. I am pleased to respond.

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

We appreciate the report you provided. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for NHTSA. We understand your frustration; however, fuel line and electrical wire damage caused by rodents are not considered a safety related defects of our authorizing statute– The National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act. We are aware that soy based wire insulation and hoses are used by manufacturers throughout the automotive industry. However, without a deterrent, rodents can find a way into a vehicle and damage hoses and wires regardless of the material. You must be more diligent in your deterrent efforts if you live in an area with a large rodent population. Some motorists report success with peppermint oil spray, which can be purchased at local retailers and online. We recommend that you continue to work with Subaru and your dealer for an amicable resolution to your problem.

We entered your information into our database. You can learn more about safety-related defects and an explanation of NHTSA's investigation and recall process on our website at https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/mvdefectsandrecalls_808795.pdf. We recommend that you contact Subaru or continue to work with your local dealer to resolve this matter.

Your request to have soy based components replaced in your MY 2015 Subaru Outback and reimbursement for the damage caused by the rodents does not fall under our jurisdiction. You may consider contacting your local Consumer Protection Agency or the West Virginia Attorney General's Office regarding your problem and rights under the State laws. You may also ask your dealership for a meeting with a Subaru district manager regarding your problem. In addition, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has jurisdiction over non-safety defects, paint, fraud or deception, warranty and dealership problems, remuneration matters, and fair trade practices. There are three ways to contact the FTC: by toll free telephone at 877-382-4357; by mail at Federal Trade Commission, CRC-240, Washington, DC 20580; and by using the Internet complaint form at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

You may also consider contacting the Better Business Bureau (BBB) Auto Line. The BBB offers free mediation/arbitration to resolve warranty disputes under guidelines established by the FTC. Remedies include repair, reimbursement, repurchase or replacement, depending on program eligibility. You can visit their web site at www.bbb.org to file a complaint and review eligibility information, or call the BBB Auto Line at 800-955-5100.

If you encounter a safety-related problem with a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment in the future, please complete an electronic Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire online at www.nhtsa.gov or call the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236. Also, owners' complaints, safety recalls, manufacturers' service bulletins, etc. can be reviewed on our website.

Sincerely,

Randy Reid

Randy Reid, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement