

Petition to NHTSA

This is a petition for the pedestrian safety requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 141, Minimum Sound Requirements for Hybrid and Electric Vehicles, be extended to all electric and hybrid vehicles operating on the roads within the US, instead of only those electric and hybrid vehicles sold after August 31, 2021.

An Order is Necessary

The implementation date was arbitrary. But the silent vehicles sold before the implementation date are as dangerous to pedestrians as those sold after the implementation date. These silent vehicles constitute a “defect which poses an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety”. An order is needed to correct this continuing situation of danger caused by motor vehicles.

It would be useful to submit data showing the comparative danger to pedestrians of electric and hybrid vehicles sold before and after the implementation date. But, such data does not exist. Necessary data on accidents are not available.

The initial basis for the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act (PSEA) of 2010 is posed as an alternative

The House-passed Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act of 2009, which after action by the senate became the PSEA of 2010, directed the Secretary of Transportation to study and report to Congress on the minimum level of sound that is necessary to be emitted from a motor vehicle, or some other method, to alert blind and other pedestrians of the presence of operating motor vehicles while traveling.

Then, as now, there was no data on accidents involving pedestrians and electric or hybrid vehicles operating with and without alerting sounds. Instead, the following findings were posed as the basis for legislative action:

Findings—H.R. 734 (111th Congress) Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act of 2009

Congress finds that—

(1) motor vehicles designed to provide the desirable benefits of reducing harmful pollutants and operating with greater fuel efficiency include gasoline-electric hybrid and electric-only vehicles, and in the foreseeable future may include vehicles powered by hydrogen fuel cell and other engine designs that rely on fuels and technologies other than the gasoline-powered internal combustion engine;

(2) these vehicle engine designs operate or are likely to operate with virtually no sound being produced by the vehicle;

(3) the total number of hybrid motor vehicles sold per year in the United States is growing dramatically, and may someday equal or exceed the number of internal combustion engine motor vehicles on the Nation's roads;

(4) blind pedestrians cannot locate and evaluate traffic by sight and instead must listen to traffic to discern its speed, direction, and other attributes in order to travel safely and independently;

(5) other people, including pedestrians who are not blind, bicyclists, runners, and small children, benefit from multi-sensory information available from vehicle traffic, including the sound of vehicle engines;

(6) when operating on their electric engines, hybrid vehicles cannot be heard by blind people and others, rendering such vehicles extremely dangerous when driving on the street, emerging from driveways, moving through parking lots, and in other situations where pedestrians and vehicles come into proximity with each other;

(7) failure to take immediate action assuring that blind pedestrians can hear hybrid and other silent vehicles in all phases of their operation will inevitably lead to pedestrian injuries and fatalities; and

(8) such accidents are preventable through vehicle designs which take into account the multi-sensory nature of traffic detection and avoidance, and require that vehicles emit a minimum level of sound designed to alert all pedestrians, especially blind pedestrians, to the presence of such vehicles.

Substance of Order to be Issued

All electric and hybrid vehicles operating on the nation's roads be required to emit warning sounds, regardless of date or country of manufacture, as specified by FMVSS 141

Name and Address of Petitioner

This petition is submitted by Sidney I Firstman, Ph.D., [REDACTED],
Highwood, Illinois [REDACTED]

NHTSA-220718-003

Sidney I. Firstman
[REDACTED]
Highwood, IL [REDACTED]

CAROL STREAM IL 601

7 JUL 2022 PM 2 L



Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

20590-

