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

RESPONSE TO →

RICHMOND VA

MARCH 16, 2023

TO MR RANDY REID, CHIEF
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT DIVISION
OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION ENFORCEMENT

MR. REID —

MY CAR WAS "TOTALLED" BECAUSE OF A PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTION
DEFECT. I NO LONGER HAVE IT (OR ANY VEHICLE)! I GUESS
I WILL BE WALKING WHEREVER I GO THE REST OF MY LIFE!
I WAS NOT GOING FAST WHEN THE COLLISION HAPPENED, SO
PERHAPS I WAS MORE AWARE THAN MOST PEOPLE OF THE
SHORT BUT IMPORTANT INTERRUPTION OF THE BRAKING ACTION
BY THE VEHICLE'S COMPUTER (CONTROL SYSTEM) OVER-RIDING
IT FOR SEVERAL SECONDS. (IN LAY TERMS, THE BRAKE PEDAL
UNDER MY FOOT WENT "SOFT" FOR A FEW SECONDS, CAUSING
THE VEHICLE TO CONTINUE UNIMPEDED DURING THAT CRUCIAL
TIME!) THEN THE BRAKES KICKED BACK-IN, BUT TOO LATE TO
AVOID A COLLISION — WHICH I AM CONVINCED WOULD NOT
HAVE HAPPENED IF THAT OVER-RIDE HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE!
I WAS NOT GOING FAST — JUST STARTING UP FROM A COMPLETE
STOP. THOSE FEW SECONDS WITHOUT THE BRAKING OVER-RIDE
ACTION BY THE AIRBAGS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE! AND NOT
FOR THE BEST! SURELY YOU MUST BE ABLE TO SIMULATE
THE BRAKING OVER-RIDE ACTION BY THE AIRBAG SYSTEM
SIMPLY BY READING THE COMPUTER'S PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS
OR FLOWCHART! YOU DON'T NEED MORE REPORTS OR CLAIMS!
JUST SOMEONE WHO CAN READ AND FLOW-CHART THE COMPUTER'S
PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS, SHOWING THE SEQUENCE OF COMMANDS!
THEY JUST HAVE TO LOOK FOR AN OVER-RIDE COMMAND THAT SAYS
SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT OF "IF THE CAR IS GOING TO COLLIDE
WITH SOMETHING, SUSPEND ALL FUNCTIONS BUT AIR-BAG EMPLOYMENT."
THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT BRAKING ACTION WAS CUT-OFF OR
SUSPENDED, WHICH WILL BE AN EASY INSTRUCTION TO FIX AND WILL
PREVENT FUTURE ACCIDENTS FROM HAPPENING OR BEING SO SEVERE!
I PERSONALLY THINK THAT (AT LEAST IN MY CASE) BRAKING POWER
WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN AIRBAGS! I WAS NOT GOING FAST!
I RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY TO THE SITUATION WITHOUT ANY FEAR,
CONFUSION OR DELAY. THE BRAKES WERE FULLY DEPLOYED AND THE
CAR WAS RESPONDING BY SLOWING DOWN IMMEDIATELY WHEN
SUDDENLY I COULD FEEL THE BRAKE PEDAL UNDER MY FOOT
GIVE WAY / GO SOFT / LET GO COMPLETELY / SUSPEND ACTION FOR
SEVERAL CRUCIAL SECONDS THAT DELAYED THE STOPPING ACTION

AND CAUSED THE CAR TO COAST INTO A COLLISION WITH THE CAR AHEAD OF ME.

FOR THOSE FEW SECONDS, THE CAR'S PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS CAUSED THE VEHICLE'S BRAKING SYSTEM TO BE SUSPENDED WHILE THE AIRBAG INFLATION COMMANDS TOOK PRECEDENCE! I AM A FORMER COMPUTER PROGRAMMER SO I AM NOT "JUST SPECULATING" HERE. THE ^{CAR'S} PROGRAMMER DECIDED THAT AIRBAGS TOOK PRECEDENCE OVER BRAKES, I DO NOT AGREE WITH THAT DECISION! PLUS I THINK IT WOULD BE AN EASY MISTAKE TO CORRECT IN THE PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS! FIXING IT COULD SAVE MANY LIVES, LESSEN MANY INJURIES, AND EVEN PREVENT EXPENSIVE REPAIRS AND INSURANCE COSTS FOR FUTURE DRIVERS! YOU COULD SAVE LIVES AND MEDICAL COSTS SIMPLY BY FIXING THAT CRUCIAL COMMAND TO SAY (IN EFFECT) "SUSPEND ALL OTHER PROGRAMMING EXCEPT ~~THE~~ BRAKING" (WHILE DEPLOYING AIRBAGS!) (SURELY YOU WILL AGREE THAT BRAKES ARE AS IMPORTANT AND VITAL IN ACCIDENTS AS AIRBAGS ARE!)

MY SECOND RECOMMENDATION IS THAT STEERING NOT BE SUSPENDED IN AN ACCIDENT EITHER! I TRIED TO TURN MY CAR TO THE SIDE BUT INSTEAD IT CONTINUED STRAIGHT FORWARD WHILE THE AIRBAG DEPLOYED—WHICH SO OBSCURED MY VIEW THAT I COULD NO LONGER SEE TO STEER. I UNDERSTAND THAT SUCH WAS A NECESSARY SIDE-EFFECT OF THE AIRBAG DEPLOYMENT, BUT MAYBE YOU CAN MAKE A LITTLE CLEAR PLASTIC SECTION AT EYE LEVEL OR SOMETHING, I DON'T KNOW, SO DRIVERS COULD STILL SEE AHEAD!

AT ANY RATE, A PROGRAMMER ~~COULD~~ CAN INSERT AN OVER-RIDE COMMAND TO THE EFFECT THAT "IF THE CAR IS GOING TO CRASH, SUSPEND ALL FUNCTIONS EXCEPT AIRBAG EMPLOYMENT AND BRAKING ACTION" WOULD SAVE LIVES AND LESSEN CRASH SEVERITY. I WAS GOING SO SLOW WHEN MY ACCIDENT HAPPENED THAT PERHAPS I WAS MORE AWARE THAN MOST OF THE BRAKES GOING SOFT FOR THOSE CRUCIAL SECONDS WHILE THE AIRBAG DEPLOYED. (I AM ALSO A RETIRED COMPUTER PROGRAMMER SO I REALIZE WHAT NEEDS FIXING.) I HOPE YOU WILL ACT ON MY RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SO SAVE LIVES AND LESSEN INJURIES.

THANK YOU.

RICHMOND, VA.

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RICHMOND VA 230

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