



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

**RL-11511190-1000**

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

April 18, 2023

The Honorable Julia Brownley  
Member, U.S. House of Representatives  
223 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd, Suite 220  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

NEF-109 rrr  
Ref. No. 11511190

Dear Representative Brownley:

Thank you for the letter on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED], concerning her model year (MY) 2022 Ford Escape Hybrid 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 roadways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain a safety defect, such as in their design, construction, or performance. Among other activities, 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 received a report from [REDACTED] regarding the issue she experienced with her vehicle through our website on March 10, 2022 (Ref. No. 11511190 enclosed). When a motorist submits a complaint to NHTSA, the complaint does not automatically prompt a contact or open a formal investigation by our agency. The information from [REDACTED] report was entered into our complaint database. Our staff reviewed the complaint, in conjunction with other relevant information, to determine if a safety defect trend exists that may require our attention. NHTSA staff may follow up and contact a vehicle owner who submitted a complaint if we require additional information.

In response to this report, we reviewed our database to identify whether a safety defect trend exists with the protective undercarriage shield, identified as the "Fordboard" by [REDACTED], in MY 2022 Ford Escape Hybrid vehicles. We specifically searched for reports of the undercarriage shield becoming detached, penetrated, or providing inadequate protection, thus exposing the vehicle's high voltage battery, electric motor, and sensitive components to potential damage. At this time, NHTSA has not identified sufficient evidence to support the opening of a safety defect investigation or to initiate a recall.

We entered [REDACTED] information into NHTSA's database where it will be used with other reports as part of NHTSA's ongoing review of potential motor vehicle safety issues that may require our attention. [REDACTED] can learn more about NHTSA's investigation and recall

process on our website at  
[https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/mvdefectsandrecalls\\_808795.pdf](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/mvdefectsandrecalls_808795.pdf).

We encourage [REDACTED] to continue to work with Ford, her local dealer, and her insurance company to explore the potential for an amicable resolution to her problem. She can ask her dealer to arrange a meeting with a Ford representative to discuss her problem. [REDACTED] may also consider contacting her local Consumer Protection Agency or the California Attorney General's Office regarding her problem and rights under state law. As you know, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulates and investigates warranty and dealership problems, reimbursement matters, and fair-trade practices. Therefore, if [REDACTED] believes this issue potentially relates to such a practice, she may contact the FTC to discuss the matter. 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](http://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov).

[REDACTED] 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. [REDACTED] can visit their website at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) to file a complaint and review eligibility information or call the BBB Auto Line at 800-955-5100.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [ron.thaniel@dot.gov](mailto:ron.thaniel@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Ron Thaniel  
Director, Governmental and External Affairs,  
Office of Governmental Affairs  
Policy and Strategic Planning

Enclosure



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration

DOT Auto Safety Hotline  
**Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire**  
To Report Vehicle Safety Defects  
1-888-DASH-2-DOT  
(1-888-327-4236)  
INTERNET: [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline)

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148

Date Received

10-MAR-2023

Repository Reference No.  
11511190

## OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

|          |            |       |    |
|----------|------------|-------|----|
| Name     | [REDACTED] |       |    |
| Address  | [REDACTED] |       |    |
| City     | Fillmore   | State | CA |
| ZIP Code | [REDACTED] |       |    |

Daytime Telephone Number

[REDACTED]

E-mail Address

[REDACTED]

Evening Telephone Number

The information you provide will be used to identify potential safety-related defects. We may share your information with the applicable vehicle manufacturer during an investigation or recall in accordance with the routine uses described in the agency's Privacy Act notice. See 49 FR 53971 (Sep. 3, 2004).

## VEHICLE INFORMATION

|   |   |                                 |  |
|---|---|---------------------------------|--|
| 17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side<br>1FMCU0E22NU [REDACTED] | MAKE<br>FORD  | Model<br>ESCAPE                 | Model Year<br>2022   |
| Date Purchased  | Dealer's Name and Telephone Number  |                                 | Engine: 2.5<br>No: Cylinders 4                               |
| Original Owner<br><input type="checkbox"/>  | Dealer's City   | STATE                           | ZIP Code   |
| Transmission Type   | <input type="checkbox"/> Antilock Brakes<br><input type="checkbox"/> Cruise Control | Powertrain<br>FRONT WHEEL DRIVE | Multiple Failure:<br>Incident Date(s)<br>[REDACTED]-JAN-2023 |

## FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

|   |                 |                     |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|
| Vehicle Components Codes: 980000 UNKNOWN OR OTHER | Failure Mileage | Failure Speed<br>50 |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|

## ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

|                                   |  |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Tire Make                         | Tire Model (Name or Number)  | Tire Size (Example P215/65R15) |
| DOT No. (Example: DOTMAL 9ABC036) | <input type="checkbox"/> Original Requirement<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prior Repair | Failure Location:              |
| Tire Component Code               | Tire Failure Type:   |                                |

## ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

|                            |                      |                 |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Make:                      | Date Manufactured:   | Model No./Name: |
| Seat Type:                 | Installation System: |                 |
| Child Seat Component Code: | Failed Part:         |                 |

## APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), Injury(ies).)

|  |   |                           |                  |                         |
|--|---|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Crash<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Fire<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Number of Persons Injured | Number of Deaths | Reported to Police<br>N |
|--|---|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|

## Narrative Description of Incident(s), Crash(es), Injury(ies).

Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e. parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

I have been without my new car since January [REDACTED] 2023 due to a design flaw in the Ford Escape Plug in Hybrid. Their inadequate undercarriage protection Ford is putting their owners at financial risk, and costing Federal and state taxpayers for a flawed product. Ford Escape Plug in Hybrid undercarriage protection is not made of a durable material. You have maybe expected plastic or metal in the past. Now it is a fabric material that I call "Fordboard", that tears and leaves the highly sensitive electronic and the hybrid battery open for damage. This happened to me in the January 2023 storms in Southern California. I have been without my new car for two months because, not only is the undercarriage not durable, but Ford refuses to divert replacement batteries for repair but continues to make the new cars so they can continue to make a profit with the help of Federal and State tax dollars. I was counting on gas savings with the electric vehicle in order to help pay for the car payment. I now have to pay full gas prices as well as the car payment. I bought the car because our family needed to expand our vehicles. I spent extra on this car to help reduce my carbon emissions. There are now more carbon emissions because of this which is contrary to why there are tax credits. Ford is gathering huge profits as a result of the changes to the tax credits, they are one of a handful of cars that are eligible. If they can't fix damaged cars, then the tax credits aren't helping. Ford refuses to warranty the situation. Ford refuses to pay for a loaner or rental car. Ford rejected my requests for financial assistance. I request help to do the following: 1) I want Ford to divert a battery assembly from the new car manufacturing to my car so I can have my car. 2) I want Ford to replace the "Fordboard" undercarriage on my car with something more durable so I don't have to worry about this ever again The consumer is requesting an update and response to the complaint.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-579. This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary of responses, may be used in support of the agency's action.