

[REDACTED]
Martinsville VA [REDACTED]

February 3, 2024

To the recipients:

A copy of this letter is being sent to Navistar in Lisle, Il, the company that makes International school buses, to the Virginia Department of Transportation, and to the US Department of Transportation.

On the morning of Friday, January 27th, 2024, I drove an International school bus onto US [REDACTED] [REDACTED] westbound headed to my first stop. It was still dark. Once I got going I probably tried to turn on the high beams but instead of high beams the headlights went out altogether. There I was, in the dark, no headlights. I slowed the bus down and started hitting switches to see if I could get any lights at all. After some seconds the headlights came back on. That's when I remembered that a tractor-trailer was coming along behind me. Did *all* the lights go out? If so, would the truck hit me from behind?

Before I got to my first stop it came to me that this was *another* failure of the vehicle's dimmer switch.

The first such failure happened two years earlier. I drove two softball teams a good distance to play two consecutive games. We left that site at 10 pm. After driving some distance the headlights went out. With no stores, houses, street lights, etc., I could see *nothing*. The emergency flashers gave me just enough light to creep along looking for some place to pull over where I thought we all would have to spend the night, but the lights came back on after about 10 or 15 seconds. They went out another six or seven times before I figured out—I think—that this happened only when I tried to turn on the high beams. The lights came back on each time but only after a nerve-jangling pause. Still, this is *not* the way one would choose to come twisting down a crooked road from up on the mountain.

The headlights of the bus I currently drive come on when I turn the key to crank it up. I would call that a safety feature except that a failing dimmer switch *over-rides it and puts us in*

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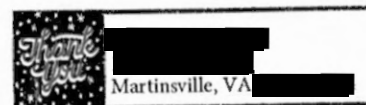
pitch darkness. It is also not a freak event. I've found that other drivers know about it as do the mechanics in our bus garage.

It was no small feat to figure out who builds International buses. The name International hardly showed up in any of my searches. IC Bus/Navistar seems be the manufacturer and I think they're situated in Lisle, Illinois. Of course, the dimmer switches may be made by someone else.

I can't help but wonder how many times, how many drivers, this has happened to over how many years but I cannot believe that the manufacturer hasn't known about this for a long time. Maybe lawsuits will improve things.

I can be contacted at [REDACTED] ., Martinsville VA [REDACTED],
or [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

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