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Beacon Falls, CT [REDACTED]
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July 1, 2026

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Request for Investigation – Potential Safety Defect Involving the 2025 Subaru Outback Infotainment Display

To Whom It May Concern:

I respectfully submit this letter requesting that the Office of Defects Investigation evaluate what I believe may be a safety-related design defect involving the infotainment display installed in the 2025 Subaru Outback.

I am the owner of a 2025 Subaru Outback and have enclosed photographs documenting a condition that, in my opinion, unnecessarily increases driver distraction and may present a foreseeable safety risk.

The 2025 Outback relies extensively on its large, portrait-oriented touchscreen to operate numerous essential vehicle functions, including climate controls, navigation, audio functions, camera displays, and vehicle settings. Unlike previous Subaru models, many controls that were once operated by physical buttons and knobs now require interaction with the touchscreen.

While wearing my prescription polarized sunglasses during normal daylight driving, the display becomes extremely difficult—and at times nearly impossible—to read from the driver's normal seating position. As a result, I must spend additional time looking away from traffic, leaning toward the display, or changing my head position in order to identify controls and read information before making adjustments.

Every additional second that a driver's eyes are diverted from the roadway increases the opportunity for a collision.

During my testing, I made an observation that I believe is particularly significant. While wearing the exact same sunglasses, the display becomes substantially easier to read from the front passenger seat. The problem is most severe from the driver's intended viewing position, suggesting that the issue is related to the interaction between the display's optical characteristics and the driver's viewing angle rather than simply the use of polarized sunglasses.

The enclosed photographs accurately illustrate this condition.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has long recognized that driver distraction associated with in-vehicle electronic systems can increase crash risk. NHTSA's Driver Distraction Guidelines emphasize that vehicle interfaces should be designed to minimize the amount of time

2

drivers divert their eyes from the roadway. My concern is not the existence of the touchscreen itself, but that its visibility from the driver's intended seating position under normal daylight conditions requires additional visual attention to perform routine driving tasks.

I have also learned that other Subaru owners have reported similar visibility concerns involving Subaru infotainment displays while wearing polarized sunglasses. Although I cannot determine how widespread this issue may be, I believe it warrants evaluation to determine whether it represents a broader design concern affecting driver safety.

I respectfully request that NHTSA:

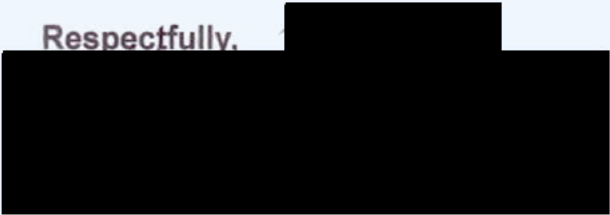
- Record this correspondence as a formal safety complaint.
- Include it in the Office of Defects Investigation database.
- Review whether similar complaints have been received involving the 2025 Subaru Outback or other Subaru models equipped with similar infotainment displays.
- Determine whether this condition warrants further engineering evaluation or investigation.

I am simultaneously providing this information to Subaru of America and have requested that Subaru Engineering evaluate the display's optical characteristics and viewing angle.

My purpose in submitting this complaint is not simply to resolve my individual situation, but to help determine whether this condition may affect other drivers and whether corrective action should be considered before it contributes to a serious crash.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to improving motor vehicle safety in the United States.

Respectfully,



Enclosures:

- Exhibit A – Photographic Comparison of Touchscreen Visibility
- Engineering Safety Complaint Submitted to Subaru of America

Exhibit A – Touchscreen Visibility Comparison

Figure 1 (Top): 2025 Subaru Outback touchscreen viewed from the driver's seat under normal daylight conditions without polarized sunglasses. The display is bright and clearly readable.



Figure 2 (Bottom): The identical touchscreen viewed from the same driver's position through my prescription polarized sunglasses. Essential controls and information become extremely difficult to read, requiring the driver to divert attention from the roadway for longer periods to operate the vehicle.



Engineering Safety Complaint Submitted to Subaru of America

July 1, 2026

Subaru of America, Inc.
Customer Advocacy Department
P.O. Box 9103
Camden, NJ 08101

Subject: Engineering Safety Complaint – 2025 Subaru Outback Touchscreen Visibility and Driver Distraction

Dear Customer Advocacy Representative:

I am submitting this correspondence as a formal Engineering Safety Complaint regarding the infotainment display installed in my 2025 Subaru Outback. I respectfully request that this complaint be forwarded to Subaru Engineering for technical evaluation and that it be entered into Subaru's product safety records.

I have been a loyal Subaru owner for many years, having owned five Subaru vehicles before purchasing this Outback. Most recently, I purchased a brand-new 2024 Subaru Forester. When Subaru introduced the redesigned 2025 Outback with its larger 11.6-inch portrait-oriented touchscreen, I was impressed by the new technology and believed it represented a significant advancement in convenience, functionality, and safety. Based largely on those improvements—and Subaru's long-standing reputation for engineering safe vehicles—I traded in my nearly new Forester and paid the additional cost to purchase the 2025 Outback.

Unfortunately, I soon discovered that the very feature that influenced my purchasing decision has become what I believe is a significant safety concern.

While wearing my prescription polarized sunglasses during normal daylight driving, the touchscreen becomes extremely difficult, and at times nearly impossible, to read from the driver's seating position. Unlike previous Subaru models, many functions that were once controlled by physical knobs and buttons now require interaction with the touchscreen. As a result, when the display cannot be clearly seen, I must spend additional time looking away from the roadway, leaning toward the display, or changing my head position in an attempt to identify controls and read information. Every additional moment a driver's eyes are diverted from surrounding traffic increases the risk of a serious collision.

During my testing, I made another important observation that I believe is critical to understanding this issue. While wearing the exact same prescription polarized sunglasses, the display becomes substantially easier to read when viewed from the front passenger seat. The problem occurs primarily from the driver's normal seating position—the very position from which the display is intended to be viewed and operated. This strongly suggests that the issue is related to the interaction between the display's optical characteristics and the driver's viewing angle, rather than simply the use of polarized sunglasses.

Enclosed photographs clearly demonstrate this condition. They accurately depict what I experience while driving and illustrate the dramatic reduction in display visibility through my sunglasses.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has recognized that vehicle interfaces should be designed to minimize the amount of time drivers must divert their eyes from the roadway. NHTSA's Driver Distraction Guidelines emphasize reducing visual demand because increased "eyes-off-road" time is associated with an increased risk of crashes. My concern is not that the Outback uses a touchscreen; rather, it is that the display's poor visibility from the driver's intended viewing position unnecessarily increases the time required to read and operate essential vehicle controls. In my opinion, this is inconsistent with the safety principles reflected in NHTSA's guidance.

Subaru has earned an exceptional reputation for designing vehicles that prioritize safety. That reputation is one of the primary reasons I have remained a Subaru customer for so many years. It is therefore especially disappointing that a feature central to the safe operation of this vehicle becomes difficult to use under normal daylight driving conditions while wearing commonly used polarized driving sunglasses.

I respectfully request that Subaru:

1. Forward this complaint to Subaru Engineering for technical evaluation.
2. Investigate whether the display's polarization characteristics, viewing angle, or optical design create a driver visibility issue.
3. Advise whether Subaru has received similar complaints from other owners.
4. Inform me whether a software update, hardware modification, replacement display, or other corrective action is available or under development.
5. Record this correspondence as a formal product safety complaint.

If Subaru is unable to provide an effective remedy that restores safe operation of the display while wearing commonly used prescription polarized sunglasses, I respectfully request that Subaru work with me toward an appropriate resolution, including repurchasing or replacing my vehicle so that I may purchase a vehicle that can be operated safely.

I have enclosed Exhibit A, containing photographs that document the visibility problem, and additional supporting documentation.

I would appreciate a written response within thirty (30) days outlining Subaru's findings and the actions it intends to take.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I remain hopeful that Subaru will address this issue in a manner consistent with the company's long-standing commitment to customer safety and satisfaction.

Respectfully,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.



Beacon Falls, CT



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