> consumer complaints about the general issue of unwanted acceleration . . . as well as many of the complaints about this subject that have been received by Toyota, were inspired by publicity," Toyota said in a letter to the NHTSA released Thursday. "But even taking them at face value, it is clear that the majority of the complaints are related to minor drivability issues and are not indicative of a safety-related defect."
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> Toyota spokesman Bill Kwong said tests by the automaker and the NHTSA revealed no problems that would explain the complaints. He said the problems were not as prevalent as the number of complaints suggested, saying the NHTSA asked for any cases where engine idle speed increased. "We remain confident in the safety of the vehicles," Kwong said.

62. In December 2008, a similar issue arose in Europe in the right-hand drive versions of Toyota's Aygo and Yaris models. After an investigation, the Company allegedly found that condensation from heaters caused increased friction in the accelerator pedal, making it stick. In mid-August 2009, Toyota made a design change in its European cars that lengthened the arm of the friction lever and changed its materials in all vehicles being produced in Europe. Despite the fact that the material used in the manufacturing of the accelerator pedals in Europe was the same material used in the U.S., Toyota did not make the change to its U.S. vehicles.

63. On April 23, 2009, *Westword* published an article entitled "The Prius can take owners on a wild ride." The article discussed several incidents involving situations where Prius drivers experienced "unintended acceleration" problems. When asked for a response, the Company denied any problems with its accelerators:

> Toyota responded to the acceleration problem in 2007 by recalling "faulty floor mats" that the company said could cause the gas pedal to stick. Another explanation from Toyota is simple driver error. "You get these customers that say, 'I stood on the brake with all my might and the car just kept on accelerating.' They're not stepping on the brake," says corporate Toyota spokesman Bill Kwong. "People are so under stress right now, people have so much on their minds. With pagers and cell phones and IM, people are just so busy with kids and family and boyfriends and girlfriends. So you're driving along, and the next thing you know, you're two miles down the road and you don't remember driving, because you're thinking about something else."

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