TOYOTA

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January 8, 2010

Mr. D. Scott Yon, Chief
Vehicle Integrity Division (NVS-213, Rm W48-314)
NHTSA, Office of Defects Investigation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: NVS-212jfa; PE09-049sup1

Dear Mr. Yon:

This letter is being sent in response to your December 3, 2009 letter regarding PE09-049. Enclosed you will find two copies of this response.

Should you have any questions about this response, please contact me at (202) 775-1707.

Sincerely,

Chris Santucci
Manager
Technical and Regulatory Affairs
TOYOTA MOTOR NORTH AMERICA, INC.

1. Toyota stated in its November 16, 2009, Defect Information Report that "manufacturing issues" and rear cross-member design were contributing factors to the root cause in the defect in the rear cross-member. Identify and discuss in detail the root cause analysis of the manufacturing issues and rear cross-member design to which Toyota refers.

Response 1

According to the results of our investigation of field recovery parts, it is estimated that the root cause is the combination of factors, such as the newer chemistry of road salt, vehicle operation in areas where road salt is frequently used, the lack of periodic car washes, the design of the rear cross member, and manufacturing issues.

In regards to the design, since the cross section of the rear cross member is open upward, this design makes it easy to accumulate a mixture of road salt and water during driving.

In regards to manufacturing issues, prior to the electrodeposition coating of the rear cross member, a phosphate treatment is applied. If the quality of the phosphate coating is not ideal, the performance of the corrosion resistance can be affected.

2. Identify and discuss the reasons why the 2006 model year was determined to be the cutoff point for the subject vehicles. Are, or will, later model year Tundra vehicles be susceptible to the same level of corrosion experienced by the subject vehicles?

Response 2

The 2007 model year Tundra is a newer generation of the vehicle. From the start of production of the 2007 model year, the cross section of the rear cross member opens downward, opposite from the previous model years. Therefore, it is estimated that a similar phenomenon will not occur on vehicles after 2007MY, as long as the environmental conditions do not change.

3. Toyota stated in its November 16, 2009, Defect Information Report that it is continuing its investigation of the subject condition through "parts recovery" and "field survey". When will these actions be completed and what does Toyota expect learn from these actions?

Response 3

The field survey and parts recovery effort conducted until November 2009 proved that the factors described above affect this phenomenon. From this point forward, Toyota will investigate the impact of the environmental conditions on the phenomenon and will also compare to peer vehicles for future development models.