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

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, DC 20590

December 5, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Roy Deutschmann, General Manager
Engineering
Toyoda Gosei
1400 Stephenson Highway
Troy, MI 48083

NEF-101sly
EA16-003

Dear Mr. Deutschmann,

As you are aware, the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has opened an Engineering Analysis (EA16-003) to investigate allegations of ruptures involving toroidal shaped hybrid air bag inflators, both passenger and driver side, manufactured by ARC Automotive, Inc. (ARC). ODI is requesting additional information from Toyoda Gosei to facilitate its investigation of the potential risk of a deployment-related field rupture of the toroidal shaped hybrid front driver air bag inflator (CADH) in the U.S. market.

The scope of this Information Request is defined as all CADH air bag inflators manufactured during a certain production time frame. The production time frame is defined by a) a starting point of May 1, 2010, the inflator build date of a confirmed field event, and b) the end point of January 31, 2018, the implementation date of equipment and process improvements by ARC on all toroidal inflator assembly lines. This Information Request is separate from and requests information supplemental to the long-established and ongoing processes the Agency has in place to monitor field rupture event allegations and ARC production anomalies through the issuance of two Standing General Orders (SGOs).[1]

Unless otherwise stated in the text, the following definitions apply to these information requests:

- **Subject Component:** Frontal driver air bag module using a single or dual stage toroidal shaped hybrid air bag inflator (CADH/DCADH) manufactured by ARC that was subsequently supplied to an OEM automobile manufacturer to be installed in the OEM's completed passenger vehicles. This includes frontal driver air bag modules delivered to the OEMs located outside of the United States where it is either possible or unknown whether the completed passenger vehicle could be shipped to the United States for sale in the U.S market. This does not include frontal passenger air bag modules shipped to OEMs out of the United States where Toyoda Gosei knows definitively the OEM does not import completed passenger vehicles for sale in the U.S. market.

[1] The SGOs can be found at NHTSA.gov under EA16-003.

- **Subject Inflator**: Single or dual stage hybrid toroidal shaped frontal driver air bag inflators (CADH/DCADH) manufactured by ARC supplied to Toyoda Gosei for use in air bag modules to be installed in a passenger vehicle.

- **Subject Component Test Deployments**: A deployment of the Subject Component or Subject Inflator that occurs during Subject Component Testing.

- **Subject Component Testing**: Any quality, verification or conformance testing regularly conducted by Toyoda Gosei in conjunction with the production of the Subject Components including but not limited to Lot Acceptance Tests (LAT), Conformance of Production tests (CoP) and/or Production Validation tests (PV).

- **Successful Deployment**: A deployment of the Subject Component or Subject Inflator during which the Subject Inflator did not rupture or produce abnormal shrapnel/projectiles.

- **Production Time Frame of Interest:** May 1, 2010, through January 31, 2018.

- **Toyoda Gosei:** Toyoda Gosei all of its past and present officers and employees, whether assigned to its principal offices or any of its field or other locations, including all of its divisions, subsidiaries (whether or not incorporated) and affiliated enterprises and all of their headquarters, regional, zone and other offices and their employees, and all agents, contractors, consultants, attorneys and law firms and other persons engaged directly or indirectly (e.g., employee of a consultant) by or under the control of Toyoda Gosei (including all business units and persons previously referred to), who are or, in or after 1995, were involved in any way with any of the following related to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:

  a. Design, engineering, analysis, modification, or production (e.g., quality control);
  b. Testing, assessment, or evaluation;
  c. Consideration, or recognition of potential or actual defects, reporting, record-keeping, and information management, (e.g., complaints, field reports, warranty information, part sales), analysis, claims, or lawsuits; or
  d. Communication to, from or intended for zone representatives, fleets, dealers, or other field locations, including but not limited to people who have the capacity to obtain information from dealers.

- **Other Terms:** To the extent that they are used in these information requests, the terms "claim," "consumer complaint," "dealer field report," "field report," "fire," "fleet," "good will," "make," "model," "model year," "notice," "property damage," "property damage claim," "rollover," "type," "warranty," "warranty adjustment," and "warranty claim," whether used in singular or in plural form, have the same meaning as found in 49 CFR 579.4.

In order for my staff to evaluate the alleged defect, certain information is required. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, please provide numbered responses to the following information requests.

Please repeat the applicable request verbatim above each response. After Toyoda Gosei's response to each request, identify the source of the information and indicate the last date the information was gathered.

1. Identify all motor vehicle manufacturers (OEMs) to which Toyoda Gosei provided the Subject Component. Separately for each OEM, provide the following additional information regarding Subject Component Test Deployments that occurred during Subject Component Testing, during the Production Time Frame of Interest, by calendar month and year. Provide the information in tabular form entitled "Toyoda Gosei DEPLOYMENT DATA."

    a. OEM name;
    b. ARC inflator part number;
    c. Tier 1 inflator part number;
    d. Tier 1 air bag module part number;
    e. OEM air bag module part number[2];
    f. Test type (LAT, CoP, PV, etc.)
    g. Date of deployment (MM/YYYY), and;
    h. Number of Successful Deployments.

2. Describe in detail the process Toyoda Gosei used to determine the Subject Component Testing information reported in response to Request 1 and explain why Toyoda Gosei believes the process is accurate and appropriate.

3. Describe in detail Toyoda Gosei's process and procedures for conducting and documenting Subject Component Testing, including, but not limited to, how frequently the testing is conducted and all applicable procedures for Subject Component or Subject Inflator whose module or inflator test results fail to result in a Successful Deployment. This request specifically includes, but is not limited to, all procedures for quarantine and disposition of Subject Components or Subject Inflators following a manufacturing issue, inflator rupture, or other anomaly.

Legal Authority for This Request

This letter is being sent to Toyoda Gosei pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30166, which authorizes NHTSA to conduct any investigation that may be necessary to enforce Chapter 301 of Title 49 and to request reports and the production of things. It constitutes a new request for information.

Civil Penalties

Toyoda Gosei's failure to respond promptly and fully to this letter could subject Toyoda Gosei to civil penalties pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30165 or lead to an action for injunctive relief pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 30163. Other remedies and sanctions are available as well. The Vehicle Safety Act, as amended, 49 U.S.C. § 30165(a)(3), provides for civil penalties of up to $24,423 per violation per day, with a maximum of $122,106,996 for a related series of daily violations, for failing or

[2] To the extent it does not affect the Agency's use of the data, it may be advantageous to combine part numbers that are functionally equivalent and differ only due to color or other trim options. To the extent that possibility exists, please contact ODI for further discussion.

refusing to perform an act required under 49 U.S.C. § 30166. *See* 49 C.F.R. § 578.6. This includes failing to respond completely, accurately, and in a timely manner to ODI information requests.

If Toyoda Gosei cannot respond to any specific request or subpart(s) thereof, please state the reason why it is unable to do so. If on the basis of attorney-client, attorney work product, or other privilege, Toyoda Gosei does not submit one or more requested documents or items of information in response to this information request, Toyoda Gosei must provide a privilege log identifying each document or item withheld, and stating the date, subject or title, the name and position of the person(s) from, and the person(s) to whom it was sent, and the name and position of any other recipient (to include all carbon copies or blind carbon copies), the nature of that information or material, and the basis for the claim of privilege and why that privilege applies.

Confidential Business Information

If Toyoda Gosei's response contains any information that you claim is confidential business information, Toyoda Gosei must request two (2) secure electronic file transfer links from Sharon Yukevich at sharon.yukevich@dot.gov. One secure electronic file transfer link is for your request for confidential treatment and will be directed to NHTSA's Office of Chief Counsel. Please see the enclosure for additional instructions on submitting a request for confidential treatment that is compliant with 49 C.F.R. Part 512 (specifically a request for confidential treatment must include the four (4) required parts that are discussed in the enclosure). The second secure electronic file transfer link is for your non-confidential response to this letter. Do not submit any confidential business information along with your non-confidential submission. Please refer to EA16-003 in Toyoda Gosei's response to this letter and in a request for confidential treatment that Toyoda Gosei may submit.

Due Date

Toyoda Gosei's response to this letter, in duplicate, together with a copy of any confidentiality request, must be submitted to this office by **February 1, 2023**. Toyoda Gosei's response must include all non-confidential attachments and a redacted version of all documents that contain confidential information. If Toyoda Gosei finds that it is unable to provide all the information requested within the time allotted, Toyoda Gosei must request an extension from me at (202) 366-5226 no later than five (5) business days before the response due date. If Toyoda Gosei is unable to provide all the information requested by the original deadline, it must submit a partial response by the original deadline with whatever information Toyoda Gosei then has available, even if an extension has been granted.

Please send email notification to Sharon Yukevich at sharon.yukevich@dot.gov and to ODI_IRresponse@dot.gov when Toyoda Gosei sends its response to this office and indicate whether there is confidential information as part of Toyoda Gosei's response.

If you have any technical questions concerning this matter, please call Sharon Yukevich of my staff at (202) 366-4925.

Sincerely,



Stephen A. Ridella, Ph.D.
Director
Office of Defects Investigation

Enclosure, Information for Requests for Confidential Treatment

ENCLOSURE – INFORMATION FOR REQUESTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT

If you believe that your response contains any material that you claim is confidential business information, submit these materials to NHTSA's Office of the Chief Counsel in accordance with 49 C.F.R. Part 512. **All requests for confidential treatment must be submitted directly to the Office of the Chief Counsel. Upon request, ODI will provide you with a secure file transfer link for your submission to the Office of the Chief Counsel.**

Requests for confidential treatment are governed by Part 512. A current version of this regulation is available on the internet at http://www.ecfr.gov by selecting Title 49 "Transportation," selecting "Parts 500 – 599" and then selecting Part 512 "Confidential Business Information."

How to request confidential treatment:

NHTSA is currently treating electronic submission as an acceptable method for submitting confidential business information to the agency under Part 512. If you claim that any of the information or documents provided in your response constitutes confidential business information within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4) or are protected from disclosure pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1905, you must request a secure file transfer link from the ODI contact listed in your Information Request. ODI will copy a representative from the Office of the Chief Counsel on the secure file transfer link for your request for confidential treatment. You must submit supporting information together with the materials that are the subject of the confidentiality request, in accordance with Part 512, to the Office of the Chief Counsel. Do not send a hardcopy of a request for confidential treatment to NHTSA's headquarters.

Your request must include a request letter that contains supporting information, pursuant to Part 512.8. Your request must also include a certificate, pursuant to Part 512.4(b) and Part 512, Appendix A.

You are required to submit one unredacted "confidential version" of the information for which you are seeking confidential treatment. Pursuant to Part 512.6, the words "ENTIRE PAGE CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION" or "CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION CONTAINED WITHIN BRACKETS" (as applicable) must appear at the top of each page containing information claimed to be confidential. In the latter situation, where not all information on the page is claimed to be confidential, identify each item of information for which confidentiality is requested within brackets: "[ ]."

You are also required to submit one redacted "public version" of the information for which you are seeking confidential treatment. Pursuant to Part 512.5(a)(2), the redacted "public version" should include redactions of any information for which you are seeking confidential treatment (i.e., the only information that should be unredacted is information for which you are **not** seeking confidential treatment).

For questions about a request for confidential treatment, please contact Dan Rabinovitz in the Office of Chief Counsel at daniel.rabinovitz@dot.gov.