



May 18, 2020

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Jeff Chang, Senior Manager, Product Safety
American Honda Motor Co.
Product Regulatory Office
1919 Torrance Blvd.
MAIL STOP 500-2C-10A
Torrance, CA, 90501-2746

NEF-101am
EA19-005

Dear Mr. Chang:

This letter is to inform you that the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has opened an Engineering Analysis (EA19-005) to investigate allegations of windshield wiper transmission malfunction in certain model year (MY) 2010-2012 and 2014-2016 Equinox and Terrain models manufactured by General Motors, and to request certain information. This information request is being sent to American Honda Motor Co. to gather information in support of ODI's comparative analysis amongst peer vehicles.

A copy of the EA19-005 opening resume is enclosed for your information.

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

- **Subject vehicles:** all of the following manufactured for sale or lease in the United States, including, but not limited to, the District of Columbia, and current U.S. territories and possessions:
 - MY 2012 – 2016 CR-V
 - MY 2010 – 2017 Odyssey
 - MY 2013 – 2017 RDX
- **Subject component:** Front windshield wiper module
- **Alleged defect:** Failure of the windshield wiper module ball joints, resulting in one or both windshield wipers becoming inoperative.
- **Honda:** American Honda Motor Co., and, Honda Motor Company, Ltd, 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 Honda (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.
- **Document:** “Document(s)” is used in the broadest sense of the word and shall mean all original written, printed, typed, recorded, or graphic matter whatsoever, however produced or reproduced, of every kind, nature, and description, and all non-identical copies of both sides thereof, including, but not limited to, papers, letters, memoranda, correspondence, communications, electronic mail (e-mail) messages (existing in hard copy and/or in electronic storage), faxes, mailgrams, telegrams, cables, telex messages, notes, annotations, working papers, drafts, minutes, records, audio and video recordings, data, databases, other information bases, summaries, charts, tables, graphics, other visual displays, photographs, statements, interviews, opinions, reports, newspaper articles, studies, analyses, evaluations, interpretations, contracts, agreements, jottings, agendas, bulletins, notices, announcements, instructions, blueprints, drawings, as-builts, changes, manuals, publications, work schedules, journals, statistical data, desk, portable and computer calendars, appointment books, diaries, travel reports, lists, tabulations, computer printouts, data processing program libraries, data processing inputs and outputs, microfilms, microfiches, statements for services, resolutions, financial statements, governmental records, business records, personnel records, work orders, pleadings, discovery in any form, affidavits, motions, responses to discovery, all transcripts, administrative filings and all mechanical, magnetic, photographic and electronic records or recordings of any kind, including any storage media associated with computers, including, but not limited to, information on hard drives, floppy disks, backup tapes, and zip drives, electronic communications, including but not limited to, the Internet and shall include any drafts or revisions pertaining to any of the foregoing, all other things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated by Honda, any other data compilations from which information can be obtained, translated if necessary, into a usable form and any other documents. For purposes of this request, any document which contains any note, comment, addition, deletion, insertion, annotation, or otherwise comprises a non-identical copy of another document shall be treated as a separate document subject to production. In all cases where original and any non-identical copies are not available, “document(s)” also means any identical copies of the original and all non-identical copies thereof. Any document, record, graph, chart, film or photograph originally produced in color must be provided in color. Furnish all documents whether verified by Honda or

not. If a document is not in the English language, provide both the original document and an English translation of the document.

- **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 C.F.R. § 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. Insofar as Honda has previously provided a document to ODI, Honda may produce it again or identify the document, the document submission to ODI in which it was included and the precise location in that submission where the document is located. When documents are produced, the documents shall be produced in an identified, organized manner that corresponds with the organization of this information request letter (including all individual requests and subparts). When documents are produced and the documents would not, standing alone, be self-explanatory, the production of documents shall be supplemented and accompanied by explanation.

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

1. State, by model and model year, the number of subject vehicles Honda has manufactured for sale or lease in the United States. Separately, for each subject vehicle manufactured to date by Honda, state the following:
 - a. Vehicle identification number (VIN);
 - b. Make;
 - c. Model;
 - d. Model Year;
 - e. Subject component part number and design version installed as original equipment;
 - f. Date of manufacture;
 - g. Date warranty coverage commenced; and
 - h. The State in the United States where the vehicle was originally sold or leased (or delivered for sale or lease).

Provide a series of tables by vehicle model or platform in Microsoft Access 2010, or a compatible format, each entitled “MODELNAME PRODUCTION DATA.”

2. State the number of each of the following, received by Honda, or of which Honda is otherwise aware, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles:
 - a. Consumer complaints, including those from fleet operators;
 - b. Field reports, including dealer field reports;

- c. Reports involving a crash, injury or fatality;
- d. Property damage claims
- e. Third-party arbitration proceedings where Honda is or was a party to the arbitration;
- f. Lawsuits, both pending and closed, in which Honda is or was a defendant or codefendant.

For subparts “a” through “f,” state the total number of each item (e.g., consumer complaints, field reports, etc.) separately. Multiple incidents involving the same vehicle are to be counted separately. Multiple reports of the same incident are also to be counted separately (i.e., a consumer complaint and a field report involving the same incident in which a crash occurred are to be counted as a crash report, a field report and a consumer complaint).

In addition, for items “c” through “f” provide a summary description of the alleged problem and causal and contributing factors and Honda’s assessment of the problem, with a summary of the significant underlying facts and evidence. For items “e” and “f” identify the parties to the action, as well as the caption, court, docket number, and date on which the complaint or other document initiating the action was filed.

3. Separately, for each item (complaint, report, claim, notice, or matter) within the scope of your response to Request No. 2, state the following information:
 - a. Honda’s file number or other identifier used;
 - b. The category of the item, as identified in Request No. 2 (i.e., consumer complaint, field report, etc.);
 - c. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person), street address, email address and telephone number;
 - d. Vehicle’s VIN;
 - e. Vehicle’s make, model and model year;
 - f. Vehicle’s mileage at time of incident;
 - g. Incident date;
 - h. Report or claim date;
 - i. Whether a crash is alleged;
 - j. Whether property damage is alleged;
 - k. Number of alleged injuries, if any; and
 - l. Number of alleged fatalities, if any.

Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2010, or a compatible format, entitled “REQUEST NUMBER TWO DATA.”

4. State, by model and model year, a total count for all of the following categories of claims, collectively, that have been paid by Honda to date that relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles: warranty claims; extended warranty claims; claims for good will services that were provided; field, zone, or similar adjustments and reimbursements; and warranty claims or repairs made in accordance with a procedure specified in a technical service bulletin or customer satisfaction campaign.
 - a. Separately, for each such claim, state the following information:
 - b. Honda’s claim number;

- c. Vehicle owner or fleet name (and fleet contact person), street address, email address and telephone number;
 - d. VIN;
 - e. Repair date;
 - f. Vehicle mileage at time of repair;
 - g. Repairing dealer's or facility's name, telephone number, city and state or ZIP code;
 - h. Labor operation number(s);
 - i. Problem code(s);
 - j. Replacement part number(s) and description(s);
 - k. Concern stated by customer;
 - l. Cause as stated on the repair order;
 - m. Correction as stated on the repair order; and
 - n. Additional comments, if any, by dealer/technician relating to claim and/or repair.
5. Provide this information in Microsoft Access 2010, or a compatible format, entitled "WARRANTY DATA."
6. State the number of each of the following that Honda has sold that may be used in the subject vehicles by component name, part number (both service and engineering/production), model and model year of the vehicle in which it is used and month/year of sale (including the cut-off date for sales, if applicable):
- a. Subject component
 - b. Any kits that have been released, or developed, by Honda for use in service repairs to the subject component/assembly.
7. Describe cowl- region water management techniques for the subject vehicles. Include any related design and production changes made by, or on behalf of, Honda in the design, material composition, manufacture, quality control, supply, or installation of the subject component, from the start of production to date, which relate to, or may relate to, the alleged defect in the subject vehicles.

Legal Authority for This Request

This letter is being sent to Honda 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

Honda's failure to respond promptly and fully to this letter could subject Honda 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 \$22,329 per violation per day, with a maximum of \$111,642,265 for a related series of daily violations, for failing or refusing to perform an act required under 49 U.S.C. § 30166. *See* 49 C.F.R. § 578.6(a)(3). This

includes failing to respond completely, accurately, and in a timely manner to ODI information requests.

If Honda 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, Honda does not submit one or more requested documents or items of information in response to this information request, Honda 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

All business confidential information must be submitted directly to the Office of Chief Counsel as described in the following paragraph and should not be sent to this office. In addition, do not submit any business confidential information in the body of the letter submitted to this office. Please refer to EA19-005 in Honda's response to this letter and in any confidentiality request submitted to the Office of Chief Counsel.

If Honda claims that any of the information or documents provided in response to this information request constitute confidential commercial material within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4), or are protected from disclosure pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1905, Honda must submit supporting information together with the materials that are the subject of the confidentiality request, in accordance with 49 C.F.R. Part 512. Additional information can be found here: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/coronavirus/submission-confidential-business-information>.

If you have any questions regarding submission of a request for confidential treatment, contact Daniel Rabinovitz, Trial Attorney, Office of Chief Counsel at daniel.rabinovitz@dot.gov or (202) 366-8534.

Due Date

Honda's response to this letter, in duplicate, together with a copy of any confidentiality request, must be submitted to this office by **July 13, 2020**. Honda's response must include all non-confidential attachments and a redacted version of all documents that contain confidential information. If Honda finds that it is unable to provide all of the information requested within the time allotted, Honda must request an extension from me at (202) 366-4703 no later than five business days before the response due date. If Honda is unable to provide all of the information requested by the original deadline, it must submit a partial response by the original deadline with whatever information Honda then has available, even if an extension has been granted.

Please send email notification to Antonio Moore at Antonio.moore@dot.gov and to ODI_IRresponse@dot.gov when Honda sends its response to this office and indicate whether there is confidential information as part of Honda's response.

If you have any technical questions concerning this matter, please call Antonio Moore of my staff at (202) 366-2022.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Ridella

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

Enclosure 1, EA19-005 Opening Resume

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