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**Sent:** Friday, February 2, 2024 8:07 PM  
**To:** Kivett, Peter (NHTSA) <[Peter.Kivett@dot.gov](mailto:Peter.Kivett@dot.gov)>  
**Subject:** Urgent Petition for Rulemaking and Safety Investigation into Hyundai 3.3L V6 Lambda II Engine Failures

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Subject: Urgent Petition for Rulemaking and Safety Investigation into Hyundai 3.3L V6 Lambda II Engine Failures

Dear NHTSA Administrator,

I write to you with a sense of urgency and deep concern regarding a critical matter that demands the immediate attention of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The alarming surge of catastrophic engine failures in Hyundai and Kia vehicles, specifically those equipped with the 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine, has reached a level of severity that necessitates comprehensive action. **This petition, grounded in a myriad of safety complaints, recalls, and ongoing investigations, seeks the NHTSA's swift initiation of rulemaking and safety investigation processes.** The gravity of the situation cannot be overstated, as it poses an imminent threat to the safety of countless American motorists.

As a 2017 Hyundai Santa Fe 3.3L V6 owner with 61,431 miles, my personal experience adds a critical voice to the urgent need for a comprehensive safety investigation into the engine. Despite maintenance and adherence to Hyundai guidelines, my engine unexpectedly failed marked by a knocking sound and stalled, decreased performance without any indications or warning lights. I was traveling at high speeds on the highway when my car lost power and could not accelerate/maintain speed. This incident has not only disrupted my daily life but has also exposed the imminent threat to the safety of countless American motorists posed by these engine failures.

My attempts to address this critical issue with Hyundai have been met with significant challenges. Shockingly, all four Hyundai dealerships in Rhode Island, when contacted, informed me that their lots were full of cars requiring engine replacements. They expressed an inability to look at my car until spring if I towed it to them, with one even stating that they would only accommodate existing customers.

Upon towing my vehicle to an authorized Hyundai dealer in Massachusetts, 55 miles away necessitated by the unavailability and unwillingness of local dealerships to address urgent issues promptly, I faced additional challenges. After weeks of waiting, I was provided with a quote for an engine replacement totaling \$19,997.12, excluding labor charges. I was told the diagnosis consisted of the technician turning the vehicle on, hearing the knock and then turning it off. This unexpected and exorbitant amount, in addition to the denial of a goodwill warranty, has placed an undue financial strain on

me, further emphasizing the urgency of addressing these engine failures at a systemic level.

I am still currently trying to implore the goodwill of Hyundai to cover the cost of the failed engine. I've proven my maintenance records are within their manufacturer recommendations and at their request of inspection, the valve train of my engine shows clean, reaffirming that I've properly maintained the engine.

The sudden onset of engine knocking, followed by the potential for **complete engine seizure without any accompanying warning lights or indications, poses an imminent risk to the safety of drivers and passengers.**

**1. Unpredictable Nature of Engine Failure:** The engine knocking issue in the Hyundai Santa Fe XL's 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine appears to manifest suddenly and without warning. This unpredictability introduces a severe safety concern as drivers are unable to anticipate or respond to the impending failure, increasing the risk of accidents, especially during highway driving or other critical situations.

**2. Loss of Vehicle Control:** The possibility of the engine seizing while in motion raises alarming concerns about the loss of vehicle control. A sudden engine failure without warning can lead to a rapid deceleration, loss of power steering, and impaired braking, creating a hazardous situation for both the affected vehicle and surrounding traffic.

**3. Absence of Warning Lights or Indicators:** The absence of warning lights or indicators exacerbates the danger, as drivers are left uninformed about the imminent failure. Traditional warning systems are designed to alert drivers to potential issues, but in this case, the lack of such warnings denies drivers the opportunity to take preventative action, posing an unacceptable risk to their safety.

**4. Potential for Accidents and Injuries:** The combination of engine knocking, potential seizure, and the lack of warning mechanisms significantly increases the likelihood of accidents, injuries, and even fatalities. The severity and suddenness of these engine failures demand immediate attention and thorough investigation to prevent further harm to Hyundai Santa Fe XL owners and other road users.

The safety implications of the engine failures experienced by owners, including myself, are deeply troubling and underscores the pressing need for a comprehensive safety investigation into the 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine.

**Background:** The 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine, produced since 2011, has become a focal point of escalating safety concerns, evidenced by a significant surge in safety complaints. With 389 engine-related complaints and an additional 121 related to the Power Train for the 2017 Hyundai Santa Fe model alone, the urgency of addressing these issues is paramount. The reported incidents, characterized by engine knocking and the potential for sudden seizures, present a clear and immediate danger to the safety of both drivers and passengers. The volume of complaints underscores the pervasive nature and critical scale of the problem.

This specific engine variant boasts advanced features, including a redesigned lightweight crankshaft, a chain-driven variable displacement oil pump, and 4-valve cylinder heads. Notably, it eliminates hydraulic cam followers, utilizing chain-driven double overhead camshafts with a Dual CVVT system. High-pressure direct fuel injectors, strategically placed and controlled by an electronically managed system, contribute to the engine's intricate design.

Multiple reports have highlighted a particularly alarming safety concern - the abrupt shutdown of vehicles **without warning or indication**. This poses an immediate risk to drivers and passengers, demanding urgent scrutiny from the NHTSA to assess and rectify potential hazards. The intricate design elements of the engine, while technologically advanced, may contribute to these reported safety concerns, necessitating a comprehensive safety investigation. This petition implores the NHTSA to promptly review these design specifics and evaluate their potential impact on overall engine safety.

**Recall Campaign 168 (TSB #: 17-01-071)**, initiated in December 2017, targeted certain 2017 Model Year Santa Fe vehicles equipped with the 3.3L V6 engine. This historical recall emphasizes the critical importance of scrutinizing the specific design elements of the 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine, underscoring the necessity for ongoing monitoring and potential further action by the NHTSA.

Acknowledging potential safety risks, including engine stalling and crash hazards, Hyundai took steps to address specific VINs, yet the broader concerns about the reliability of the 3.3L Lambda II engine persist. The seriousness of these safety concerns necessitates swift and thorough action to ensure the well-being of those on the road with these vehicles.

The recall addressed crankshafts with pin surface irregularities, which could lead to premature crankshaft and/or engine bearing wear. Potential consequences included knocking noise, reduced power and/or hesitation, and the illumination of warning lamps. If driven with a worn engine bearing or crankshaft, the engine could stall. While Hyundai has taken steps to remedy this issue for specific VINs, it underscores broader concerns about the reliability of the 3.3L Lambda II engine. The seriousness of these safety concerns necessitates swift and thorough action to ensure the well-being of those on the road with these vehicles.

**Kia Sorento Federal Investigation:** A recent federal investigation has been launched following 13 complaints regarding 2016-2017 Kia Sorento models, also equipped with the 3.3-liter Lambda II engines. Reported issues include sudden power loss, coolant loss, high engine temperatures, and smoke from engine compartments. Owners have highlighted the challenges of restarting Lambda II engines after experiencing power losses, often resulting in engine replacements due to failures related to head bolts or head gaskets.

**Class Action Lawsuits and Consumer Trust Erosion:** Additionally, at least 11 class action lawsuits have been filed against Hyundai and Kia, alleging that defective GDI

(gasoline direct injection) engines pose risks of stalling or catching fire. The consolidated class action, filed in the Central District of California, alleges claims against both manufacturers for fraudulent concealment, breach of implied warranty, unfair competition, false advertising, and violations of consumer protection laws. These lawsuits further emphasize the erosion of consumer trust, with plummeting resale values and concerns about the adequacy of recalls.

**In Canada**, dated July 24, 2022, the class action includes GDI engines across several Hyundai models, namely the Theta II 2.4-litre, turbocharged 2.0-litre, Nu 2.0-litre, Gamma II 1.6-litre, turbocharged 1.6-litre, and Lambda II 3.0-litre, 3.3-litre, 3.8-litre, and turbocharged 3.3-litre. The lawsuit points to defective workmanship during expedited production as a root cause, resulting in faulty engine components and premature failures. This leads to the circulation of metal debris in the engine oil, causing contamination, insufficient lubrication, and consequential damage.

**In Australia**, class action proceedings were initiated on February 15, 2023, against Hyundai Motor Company Australia Pty Limited and its South Korean parent, Hyundai Motor Company. The action, funded by Woodsford and represented by Johnson Winter Slattery, addresses defective engines in various Hyundai vehicles sold in Australia from 2011 onwards, parallel to the models implicated in the U.S. The legal proceedings highlight Hyundai's admissions regarding manufacturing processes and design defects, underscoring a pattern of faults leading to catastrophic consequences. In this legal battle, Hyundai has admitted to manufacturing defects in a subset of vehicles, including issues with crankshaft assembly swarf, brittle piston rings, and faulty software. These defects led to a failure to comply with statutory and express warranties, as well as misleading representations about the vehicles' quality, reliability, durability, and safety. Moreover, the class action contends that Hyundai was aware of these engine issues since at least 2015, raising questions about the company's transparency and consumer protection practices. The affected vehicles, spanning various models and model years, have exhibited a range of faults, from knocking sounds and internal engine damage to increased oil and fuel consumption, sudden power loss, and, in extreme cases, fires.

These legal developments further underscores the widespread and enduring nature of the engine defects, bringing an international dimension to the urgency of NHTSA's intervention. The interconnectedness of these issues across global markets reinforces the need for a comprehensive investigation to safeguard the interests of American consumers who may be similarly affected. These revelations solidify the urgency of scrutinizing the design and manufacturing elements of the 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine. The risks identified in the class action align with the safety concerns voiced by affected Hyundai and Kia owners in the United States, collectively emphasizing the imperative for NHTSA intervention and rulemaking to protect consumers and rectify these widespread defects.

**Request for Rulemaking:** I formally request the immediate commencement of a rulemaking proceeding to assess and potentially amend existing motor vehicle safety standards that govern the Hyundai 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine. This undertaking is

crucial to ensure that these vehicles adhere to safety standards that effectively mitigate and rectify the identified defects, thereby preventing further harm to consumers.

**Request for Safety Investigation:** In tandem with the rulemaking request, I urge the initiation of a swift and thorough safety investigation. This investigation must delve into the root causes of the widespread engine failures in Hyundai vehicles equipped with the 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine. It should encompass a rigorous assessment of potential defects, the sufficiency of current safety standards, and a judicious evaluation of the imperative for a defect or noncompliance order.

**Supporting Facts:** The evidence supporting this petition is irrefutable, grounded in an escalating number of safety complaints and incidents directly linked to the Hyundai 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine. The scale and severity of these incidents necessitate an urgent and robust response to safeguard the interests and safety of American motorists.

**Requirements for Petition:** In strict accordance with 49 CFR 552.4, this petition meticulously adheres to all stipulated requirements:

(a) **Written in English:** This petition is eloquently presented in the English language. (b) **Heading with the word "Petition":** The heading prominently and explicitly includes the word "Petition." (c) **Facts Establishing the Need for an Order:** The petition meticulously sets forth a compendium of verifiable facts, compellingly demonstrating the pressing need for an order. (d) **Brief Description of the Substance of the Order:** The petition succinctly outlines the substantive elements of the sought-after order, emphasizing the gravity of a comprehensive safety investigation and potential rule amendments. (e) **Name and Address of the Petitioner:** The petition scrupulously includes the petitioner's name and address for the purpose of unequivocal identification.

**Conclusion:** I firmly assert that immediate action is imperative to address the pervasive safety concerns associated with the 3.3L V6 Lambda II engine. Your decisive intervention will not only uphold the core principles of the NHTSA but also safeguard the lives and well-being of countless American citizens. The urgency of this matter cannot be overstated, and I appreciate your unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety of our nation's motorists. I trust that your prompt attention to this issue will contribute significantly to mitigating potential risks and restoring public confidence in vehicular safety.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Jewell

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