

NISSAN

NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC.

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02V-299 ① of ③

November 12, 2002

Mr. Kenneth Weinstein
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

We are transmitting the enclosed Defect Information Report in accordance with 49 CFR Part 573. A voluntary recall campaign will be initiated and your office provided with the notices. Nissan currently plans to begin owner notification on January 15, 2003.

Very truly,



Frank D. Slaveter
Senior Manager,
Technical Compliance

Encl.

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DEFECT INFORMATION REPORT

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1. Manufacturer:

Nissan North America, Inc.

2. Vehicles Potentially Involved:

2001-2003 model year four wheel drive Nissan Frontier and Xterra vehicles produced from July 15, 2000 (start of production) to September 22, 2002. Vehicles manufactured after this date are not affected.

3. Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Involved:

Approximately 143,000.

4. Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Actually Contain the Defect:

Unknown.

5. Description of the Defect:

Water may enter the rear axle housing due to inadequate sealing of the ABS sensor in the axle housing. This may result in corrosion and eventual failure of the wheel bearing. If this occurs, the wheel assembly could separate from the vehicle.

6. Chronology of Principal Events

April 2002 – Several incidents were reported of rear axle failure.

May – October 2002 – An investigation was conducted to determine the cause of the axle failures and to determine the extent of the incident and risk to safety.

September 23, 2002 – A production change was made to improve the sealing of the ABS sensor in the axle housing.

November 5, 2002 – Nissan completed its investigation and determined that a safety related defect may exist and that a recall campaign should be conducted.

7. Description of Corrective Action:

Nissan plans to begin notifying owners of potentially affected vehicles on January 15, 2003. The rear axle will be inspected for water intrusion and any affected components will be replaced. The ABS sensor on all vehicles will be resealed to prevent water intrusion.

8. Copy of Notices:

Copies of all notices will be provided to NHTSA as they become available.