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Chairman Towns Taking Additional Steps to Ensure Toyota Corrects Sudden Acceleration Problem

Chairman wants information on NHTSA's investigation into post-correction vehicle complaints

WASHINGTON – Chairman Edolphus "Ed" Towns (D-NY) is asking the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) for answers about its investigation into recalled Toyota vehicles. Specifically, Chairman Towns is interested in recalled Toyota vehicles that were mechanically corrected but continue to experience sudden acceleration problems. In a letter to NHTSA Administrator David Strickland, Chairman Towns requests answers on the Agency's recently announced efforts to investigate possible root causes of the post-recall correction complaints.

"According to recent media reports, some Toyota drivers continue to experience unintended acceleration problems even after corrections are made to their vehicles," writes Chairman Towns. "We want to ensure that the steps Toyota is taking to correct the sudden acceleration problem are working."

Since a series of recalls began last fall related to sudden unintended acceleration in Toyota vehicles, Toyota has stated that there are two chief causes for this condition: sticky gas pedals and gas pedal entrapment in certain kinds of floor mats. Consequently, Toyota has recalled millions of vehicles to make mechanical corrections to either the gas pedal assembly or to replace the floor mats, or both. However, it appears that in some instances these corrections have not fixed the problem.

Chairman Towns opened the Committee's investigation into Toyota's sudden acceleration problem in January 2010. On February 24, 2010, the Committee held a [hearing](#) titled, "Toyota Gas Pedals: Is the Public At Risk?" to examine the Federal government's response to the Toyota recall, and to gain a better understanding of the nature of the sudden acceleration problem in Toyota vehicles and what should be done about it. Most recently,

[Chairman Towns hit Toyota](#)

for lack of disclosure after a former senior lawyer at Toyota indicated that Toyota deliberately withheld records that it was legally required to produce in response to discovery orders in litigation. Chairman Towns has given Toyota until Friday, March 12, 2010 to respond to the allegations.

In the letter to Administrator Strickland, Chairman Towns requests the following:

1. Please describe the steps NHTSA is taking to ensure that all of the causes of the sudden acceleration problem in Toyota vehicles are identified.
2. Please describe the steps NHTSA is taking to ensure that the sudden acceleration problem in Toyota vehicles is fixed.
3. Please prepare a monthly report that documents the number of complaints by Toyota drivers who are having trouble with unintended acceleration after their recalled vehicles have been repaired. Please provide the model and model year for each of these complaints and a brief description of the reported acceleration event as described by the driver.
4. For each reported event, please provide a description of the steps taken by NHTSA to investigate the incident. This should include: (a) the dates actions were taken; (b) what if anything was discovered (or whether the investigation was inconclusive); (c) the method used to conduct the investigation; and (d) what additional actions the agency intends to take.
5. As these cases are compiled and analyzed, I also request that you provide periodic briefings to Committee staff regarding what trends or unique factors the agency believes, through its analysis, may be present in these post-correction vehicle complaints. Please also indicate to the Committee if, due to technical or resource limitations, the agency is unable to thoroughly analyze any particular complaint (for any such cases, please elaborate).
6. Please provide on a continuing basis copies of any reports the agency may produce regarding these post-correction complaints.

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Documents and Links

[Letter from Chairman Edolphus Towns to NHTSA Administrator David Strickland](#)