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Report of Safety Complaints Memo Sparks Chairman Towns' Toyota Inquiry

Wants to review alleged memo that catalogues employees' concerns regarding safety of Toyota vehicles

WASHINGTON – Chairman Edolphus “Ed” Towns (D-NY) wants to review a memo supposedly crafted by veteran Toyota employees in the fall of 2006 and sent to Toyota senior management, alerting them to concerns the employees had regarding the safety of Toyota vehicles. In a letter to Toyota North America President Yoshimi Inaba, Chairman Towns asks Toyota to turn over the memo where Toyota employees allegedly state that Toyota was taking dangerous safety shortcuts in order to lower costs and boost production. The safety memo was [reported today in the Los Angeles Times](#).

According to the article, employees stated that they were concerned that “the processes which are essential for producing safe cars” might be “ultimately ignored.” Finally, the employees warned Toyota that a failure to act could “become a great problem that involves the company’s survival.” The Times article quotes the employees as saying that Toyota completely ignored their memo and never responded to their concerns.

“If senior Toyota officials ignored important safety concerns raised by their own employees, it calls into question Toyota’s corporate priorities and its commitment to safety,” wrote Chairman Towns.

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is investigating the circumstances surrounding the recent recall of millions of Toyota vehicles due to sudden unintended acceleration. As part of this inquiry, the Committee is looking into whether Toyota ignored important warnings, such as the reported safety memo, regarding the safety of its vehicles.

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.

Chairman Towns asked Mr. Inaba to produce the alleged memo by Wednesday, March 10, 2010.

Documents and Links

[Letter from Chairman Edolphus Towns to Toyota North America President and CEO Yoshimi Inaba](#)