



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

June 26, 2018

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

Thank you for your letter of June 13, 2018 calling attention to reports of fires from several models of Kia and Hyundai vehicles, as highlighted by the recent Center for Auto Safety (CAS) review of filed consumer complaints. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is currently reviewing the CAS petition and will take all actions necessary to ensure vehicle safety.

Below, please find answers regarding each of the questions you posed in your letter.

- 1. Has NHTSA initiated a safety defect investigation into these non-collision-related Kia and Hyundai fires? Provide all communications, including e-mails between and among NHTSA officials and staff, regarding this deliberation.**

RESPONSE: NHTSA is currently investigating certain Kia and Hyundai vehicles (investigations RQ17-003 and RQ17-004 respectively) for engine failure issues, many of which were reported to NHTSA as having resulted in non-collision fires. As part of these investigations, the agency is reviewing all non-collision fires related to engine failures.

During the investigations, NHTSA has found that the majority of the non-collision fire related complaints received by NHTSA on the vehicles referenced in the CAS review are covered by these two investigations.

The agency is reviewing any non-collision fire complaints to NHTSA, and other available data on all Kia and Hyundai vehicles. To date, NHTSA has not initiated a separate safety defect investigation into the model year 2011-2014 Kia Optima and Sorento and Hyundai Sonata and Santa Fe vehicles referenced in the CAS petition. However, NHTSA will not hesitate to formally initiate a separate safety defect investigation and take action as warranted and based upon the data.

While NHTSA does not provide deliberative communications during an ongoing investigation, the agency is able to offer an in-person briefing to provide further information.



**2. What action is NHTSA taking to address these spontaneous fires in Kia and Hyundai vehicles?**

RESPONSE: NHTSA is currently investigating a number of Kia and Hyundai vehicles for engine failure issues, as described in response to your first question. The agency is actively reviewing all non-collision fire complaints to NHTSA and any other available data that might be relevant to these issues on all Kia and Hyundai vehicles.

**3. Has NHTSA been in contact with Kia and Hyundai regarding these alleged fires in their vehicles? If so, provide all communications, including e-mails, between NHTSA staff and Kia and Hyundai relating to these alleged fires.**

RESPONSE: NHTSA communicates frequently with any automaker as part of an ongoing investigation. The communications typically include telephonic and in-person meetings, and cover a broad range of topics including engineering analysis, scientific test results, examination of relevant timelines, and information submitted to NHTSA by the public or third parties. This information is potentially used in enforcement actions and/or litigation. NHTSA strives to make as much information publicly available without impeding ongoing investigations or enforcement actions.

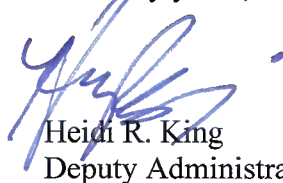
While NHTSA does not provide deliberative communications during an ongoing investigation, the agency is able to offer an in-person briefing to provide further information.

**4. Provide copies of all complaints received in the past five years by NHTSA from any source that relate to alleged fires in Kia and Hyundai vehicles.**

RESPONSE: NHTSA has received 402 complaints related to both collision and non-collision fires on all Kia and Hyundai vehicles. Vehicles fires can result from a number of diverse causes, including electrical faults and flammable fluid leaks. NHTSA prioritizes any complaint involving a vehicle fire. The complaints NHTSA has received are currently being compiled in response to your request into one package and will be transmitted to you in the near future.

The agency will not hesitate to use its oversight authorities to ensure vehicle safety. Thank you again for your letter and your continued commitment to public safety.

Sincerely yours,



Heidi R. King  
Deputy Administrator