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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEB SITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

November 26, 2014

Mr. Takuji Yamada
President
Honda North America, Inc.
700 Van Ness Avenue
Torrance, California 90501-1486

Dear Mr. Yamada:

On November 20, 2014, the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing titled, "Examining Takata Airbag Defects and the Vehicle Recall Process." The hearing examined the circumstances surrounding Takata Corporation's manufacturing, distribution, and installation of defective airbags that have been linked to four deaths and dozens of injuries in the United States. The hearing also examined the steps that auto manufacturers are taking to ensure an adequate supply of replacement parts and to provide alternate transportation in order to effectuate their remedial program.

At this hearing, which was chaired by Senator Nelson, Mr. Rick Schostek, Executive Vice President, testified on behalf of your company. Unfortunately, Mr. Schostek was unable to satisfactorily answer many of the questions posed to him by Senator Nelson and other Members of the Committee. Specifically, Mr. Schostek was unable to provide detailed information about the availability of sufficient replacement parts to fix impacted Honda vehicles. In addition, Mr. Schostek did not advise the Committee that Honda had produced an internal study detailing its failure to report approximately 1,729 injuries or deaths to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as required by law. As a result, we still have many significant questions about how Honda intends to fix impacted vehicles in a timely manner and minimize the impact on affected owners.

To help the Committee get answers to these questions, please provide the following information and documents:

1. All communications with Takata Corporation that refer to, relate to, discuss, or concern the Takata inflators not performing as intended and/or any airbag rupture.
2. All communications that refer to, relate to, discuss, or concern the Takata inflators not performing as intended and/or any airbag rupture.

3. A copy of the internal study produced by American Honda Motor Co. finding that the company failed to report quarterly to NHTSA's Early Warning System (EWS) 1,729 incidents in which its vehicles caused an injury or death. In addition, and in connection with this internal report, please provide the following:
 - a. The name and specifications of the computer program(s) or system(s) used by American Honda Motor Co. to produce EWS reports from 2003 to the present time.
 - b. The name, position, and position description of all persons in the management chain with responsibility over the EWS reports, all the way to the Chief Executive Officer or President level, from 2003 to the present time.
 - c. Any internal documents or correspondence from 2003 to the present that mentions any injuries or deaths that were omitted from EWS reports, whether intentional or by unintentional omission.
4. Identification of each incident in which an airbag rupture has occurred, or is alleged to have occurred, in a Honda vehicle, of which Honda is aware by any means (including, but not limited to, media reports), regardless of whether there was a death, injury, or property damage. This list of incidents should include, but is not limited to, the 1,729 incidents in the internal report referenced in Question 3.
5. All documents that refer or relate to concerns or allegations (regardless of whether or not such concerns or allegations were substantiated) by any Honda employee or contractor that any Takata airbag or airbag component (including the airbag inflator) was defective or improperly manufactured.
6. All audits that refer or relate to Takata's production of airbags or airbag components, regardless of whether they were performed by Honda, Takata, or a third party.
7. A statement on whether Honda has conducted any testing, or requested that testing be conducted by a third party on behalf of Honda, involving or relating to airbag ruptures. Include a description of the testing conducted and a copy of any report or testing results produced.
8. A statement on whether Honda has performed any investigation, or requested that an investigation be conducted by a third party on behalf of Honda, involving or relating to airbag ruptures. Include in your answer a description of the investigation, dates conducted, and a copy of any report produced as a result of the investigation.

9. A statement on whether Honda sent any employees to visit or inspect Takata facilities (including production and management facilities) between January 1, 2001, and the present. Include in your answer the names and titles of the employees, the Takata facility visited, the purpose of the visit or inspection, and the dates when such visit or inspection occurred.
10. All information relating to the number of replacement inflators that Takata is currently producing for Honda vehicles and how long it will take Takata to produce replacement inflators for the population of Honda vehicles currently impacted by recalls or safety improvement campaigns related to airbag ruptures or other defects.
11. All communications, including any internal or third party test results or investigations, regarding the performance of the replacement inflators that Honda is installing in impacted vehicles with defective airbag inflators.
12. All communications concerning Honda's outreach to vehicle owners with potentially defective Takata airbag inflators regarding its recalls or safety improvement campaigns. At a minimum, this should include copies of phone scripts, letters, emails, or other outreach or inducements provided to owners to alert them that the airbag inflators in their vehicles are subject to a recall or safety improvement campaign.
13. All communications from Honda to dealers or consumers regarding the availability of loaner vehicles, rental cars, or alternate transportation for owners whose cars are being repaired or for owners whose cars cannot be repaired in a timely manner. Specifically, include any and all documents that contain definitions regarding the "appropriateness" of providing a loaner car, rental car, or alternate transportation to an impacted owner.
14. All communications from dealers or consumers to Honda regarding the unavailability of loaner cars, rental cars, or alternate transportation for owners whose vehicles have been impacted by airbag recalls or safety improvement campaigns.
15. All communications from Honda to dealers regarding the supply of replacement inflators and how dealers should handle and prioritize the replacement of impacted Takata inflators.
16. A corporate organizational chart(s) identifying the employees, by name and title, who have been involved in investigating or decision-making regarding airbag ruptures or defects from January 1, 2001, to the present.
17. A copy of any document retention policy that has applied to the documents requested herein from January 1, 2001, to the present.

Mr. Takuji Yamada
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We ask that you provide this information by December 19, 2014. The Committee is requesting this information under the authority of Senate Rules XXV and XXVI. An attachment to this letter provides additional information about how to respond to the Committee's request. If you have any questions, please contact Christian Tamotsu Fjeld (202-224-1270) or Peter Curtin (202-224-1300) of the Committee staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John D. Rockefeller, IV". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being particularly prominent.

John D. Rockefeller, IV
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bill Nelson". The signature is cursive and elegant, with the first name "Bill" being prominent.

Bill Nelson
Chairman, Science and Space Subcommittee

CC: John Thune, Ranking Member