

**Statement of Scott G. Kunselman, Sr. Vice President
and Head of Vehicle Safety & Regulatory Compliance, Chrysler Group LLC
to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation**

November 20, 2014

Chairman Nelson, Ranking Member Thune, Members of the Committee ... my name is Scott Kunselman and I am Senior Vice President and Head of Vehicle Safety and Regulatory Compliance at Chrysler Group LLC.

I lead an organization with a mission of safeguarding our customers, a mission we embrace wholeheartedly.

I'd like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear today to discuss this important matter. As you know, Chrysler's review of our involvement with Takata airbags is ongoing. Hence, my testimony is based on my recollection today, and not based on a comprehensive review of all relevant information under Chrysler's possession or control.

Today's automobiles are among the most sophisticated and complex consumer goods on the market. Auto manufacturers are more committed than ever to developing advanced safety technologies to reduce fatalities and injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes. On a daily basis, we work to design, engineer, and manufacture vehicles to withstand a myriad of operating conditions.

Promoting and ensuring vehicle safety is a responsibility shared by auto makers, suppliers, government and consumers. Chrysler Group looks forward to continuing this collective engagement with Takata and NHTSA to help address the current situation.

Chrysler Group has been actively engaged with Takata and NHTSA since Takata first informed us in April 2013 that certain air-bag inflators used by other auto makers may malfunction on deployment. These inflators, described by Takata as the Alpha population, have since been linked to at least four fatalities.

They have never been used in our vehicles.

Our vehicles were equipped with Takata's Beta-population inflators. In April 2013, Takata assured us that the manufacturing nonconformance that led to the Alpha-population recall had been corrected. Chrysler Group engineers subsequently conducted a follow-up investigation and confirmed the Beta inflators benefited from an upgraded manufacturing process.

In October 2013, we learned that one of our vehicles in southern Florida was subject to a high-pressure deployment involving a driver's-side air bag and caused a personal injury. This remains the one incident of its kind involving one of our vehicles.

In response to this incident, and working with Takata and in consultation with NHTSA, we launched an investigation and conducted component-testing.

In May 2014, Takata advised Chrysler Group of four incidents involving vehicles produced by other auto manufacturers. Those vehicles were equipped with Takata inflators similar to the inflators used in our vehicles.

In June 2014, Chrysler Group announced plans to replace Beta-population inflators in certain vehicles registered or purchased in four areas known for high humidity – a factor believed to have played a role in high-pressure deployments. We will begin notifying affected customers on or before December 19th when they may schedule service. Our action covers approximately 371,000 vehicles in Florida, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

It is important to understand the distinction between the Alpha and Beta populations. The Alpha inflators are associated with the most severe events, a substantially higher incident rate, and were found to contain a defined manufacturing defect. None of our vehicles were built with an Alpha-population inflator.

Our vehicles were equipped with Beta inflators. These are known to have deployed as intended more than 10,000 times in our vehicles across the U.S., with 830 of those deployments occurring in the regions affected by our field action. As I previously stated, there is one incident involving a high-pressure deployment in one of our vehicles. This took place in Florida, a state covered by our announced regional field action.

Chrysler Group continues to work with NHTSA as this situation evolves and we will respond to the agency's most recent request for additional information, which the company received on November 18th.

In closing, I would like to reiterate our belief that promoting and ensuring vehicle safety is a responsibility shared by auto makers, suppliers, government, and consumers. Chrysler Group will continue to work collaboratively with Takata, NHTSA and others to address this matter. I once again extend my thanks to the Committee for discussing this important issue.