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ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6115
Majority (202) 225–2927
Minority (202) 225–3641

March 11, 2014

Mary T. Barra
Chief Executive Officer
General Motors Company
P.O. Box 33170
Detroit, MI 48232-5170

Dear Ms. Barra:

Pursuant to Rules X and XI of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Commerce is examining General Motors Company's (General Motors or GM) response to consumer complaints related to problems with ignition switches, including loss of power and shutdown of engines and safety systems, in vehicles it manufactured.

Last month, General Motors Company announced recalls of six vehicle models in the United States, totaling approximately 1.3 million vehicles, in order to "to correct a condition with the ignition switch that may allow the key to unintentionally move or switch to the 'accessory' or 'off' position, turning off the engine and most of the electrical components on the vehicle."[1] As your company acknowledged in a press release dated February 25, 2014, the ignition switch problems, or "recall condition," may have "caused or contributed to the non-deployment of the frontal airbags . . . ."[2] The ignition switch problems in the six recalled GM models have been linked to 31 frontal crashes and 13 fatalities as a result of non-deployment of air bags.

Problems involving ignition switches and stalls in the recalled GM models are not a recent or unknown phenomenon. Since 2003, consumers have filed numerous complaints with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) describing problems with the recalled GM vehicles, including reports that the vehicles could stall or lose power while driving, sometimes at high rates of speed. The New York Times reported that its review of this database revealed over 260 such cases.[3] Reports indicate that NHTSA conducted investigations of some of these consumer complaints, including hiring contractors to examine two incidents that

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[1] Press Release, General Motors LLC, "GM Expands Ignition Switch Recall" (February 25, 2014) available at http://media.gm.com/media/us/en/gm/news.detail.html/content/Pages/news/us/en/2014/Feb/0225-ion.html
[2] Id.
[3] Hilary Scott et al. *Auto Regulators Dismissed Defect Tied to 13 Deaths*, N.Y. Times (March 8, 2014) available at http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/09/business/auto-regulators-dismissed-defect-tied-to-13-deaths.html.

fatalities.[4] In response to other complaints related to stalls and ignition switches in GM vehicles, the agency determined that there was "insufficient evidence to warrant opening a safety defect investigation at this time."[5] Recently, on March 4, 2014, NHTSA issued a Special Order to General Motors, opening a "Timeliness Query . . . to evaluate the timing of GM's defect decision making and reporting of the safety defect to NHTSA."[6]

To assist the Committee in its investigation, we request that you provide the following documents no later than March 25, 2014:

1. All documents related to GM Problem Resolution Tracking System (PRTS) inquiries that refer or relate to problems with stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches in the GM vehicles subject to the recall.
2. All field reports submitted to GM referring or relating to problems with stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches in the GM vehicles subject to the recall.
3. All documents related to Field Performance Evaluations for the vehicles and model years identified in NHTSA Recall Number 14V-047 including, but not limited to, surveys, analyses and/or assessments conducted by third parties retained by GM.
4. All analyses of field reports, incident reports, defect petitions, consumer complaints, warranty reports, and/or reports of injury, death or property damage that refer or relate to stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches in the GM vehicles subject to the recall, including documents that relate to decisions to investigate such matters.
5. All documents that refer or relate to proposals, corrective actions, changes, or service campaigns to address problems with stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches.
6. All GM Service Bulletins that refer or relate to stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches.
7. All documents submitted to NHTSA, or created or prepared for NHTSA, referring or relating to stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches in the GM vehicles subject to the recall.
8. A detailed timeline of all interactions and communications between GM and NHTSA relating or referring to problems with stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches.
9. All communications to or from GM relating or referring to problems with stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches.

GM personnel have already been in contact with Committee staff to schedule a briefing on this matter. We request that this briefing occur no later than March 18, 2014, to address the following issues:

1. GM's response to reports of incidents since 2003 involving problems with stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches.
2. GM's interaction with NHTSA since 2003 relating to problems with stalls, airbags, and/or ignition switches.

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[4] Id.

[5] See, e.g., documents available at http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/03/09/business/09recall-docviewer.html?action=click&contentCollection=Business%20Day&module=RelatedCoverage&region=Marginalia&pgtype=article.

[6] Special Order, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in re TQ14-001 NHTSA Recall No. 14V-047 (March 4, 2014) available at http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/communications/pdf/2014-03-04_Special_Order_Directed_GM_LLC.pdf .

An attachment to this letter provides additional information on how to respond to the Committee's request. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Karen Christian or John Ohly of the Majority Committee staff at (202) 225-2927 or Brian Cohen of the Minority Committee Staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,

Fred Upton
Chairman

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member

Tim Murphy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and investigations

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Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and investigations

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Subcommittee on Oversight and investigations