

October 29, 2014

The President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of safety, consumer and public health organizations, we are writing regarding your selection of the next Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). This is a critical appointment at a critical time in this Administration. We respectfully urge you to nominate an individual who will be a strong leader, an effective regulator, and a committed champion of consumer protection, public safety and government transparency.

This past year a multitude of grievous problems have been identified by consumer, health and safety groups, highlighted in several Congressional hearings and reported in countless media stories across the country. Serious vehicle defects that pose a risk to public safety have resulted in tragic and unnecessary deaths and injuries and millions of vehicles being recalled. Investigations show that General Motors and others may have purposely ignored federal law requiring the disclosure of life-threatening vehicle defects. Every day the public learns about missteps by the Agency and failures to use available legal tools to compel corporate accountability and action. Furthermore, the chronic lack of transparency within the Agency has hampered the ability of consumers to verify and rectify grave safety problems in a timely fashion.

It is clear that NHTSA's identification and response to deadly vehicle safety defects have been inadequate and ineffective. Unfortunately, the public's confidence in the Agency's ability to assure their safety is waning. Dissatisfaction with NHTSA's performance is at an all-time high as evidenced by the myriad of bills introduced in Congress to address problems identified by the General Motors ignition debacle, and recently, by the Takata airbag explosions.

In addition to deep-seated and systemic problems with this Agency's oversight of the auto industry, there are numerous safety regulations that languish despite clear statutory deadlines. Public safety is delayed and denied when the Agency fails to issue safety standards for motor vehicle, motorcoach and truck safety that have been required by Congress.

For these reasons, we urge you to select an individual who has extensive knowledge of the regulatory process, will not be timid in using NHTSA's legal authority to enforce the law, understands the urgency of making improvements and will restore public confidence.

Respectfully,

Jacqueline Gillan, President  
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

Janette Fennell, Founder and President  
KidsAndCars.org

Clarence Ditlow, Executive Director  
Center for Auto Safety

John Lannen, Executive Director  
Truck Safety Coalition

Dr. Stephen W. Hargarten, M.D., MPH  
Founding President  
Society for the Advancement of Violence  
and Injury Research

Joan Claybrook, President Emeritus  
Public Citizen

Andrew McGuire, Executive Director  
Trauma Foundation

Stephen Brobeck, Executive Director  
Consumer Federation of America

Rosemary Shahan, Founder and President  
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety

Stephen Owings, President and Co-Founder  
Road Safe America

Jennifer Tierney, Board Member  
Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways