

Toyota's Independent Quality Advisory Panel Headed to Japan

May 20, 2010

Panel of safety and quality experts and engineers will meet with Toyota president

Peer review of current study of electronic throttle control system among several topics

WASHINGTON (May 20, 2010) — The independent North American Quality Advisory Panel charged with assessing Toyota's strengthened safety and quality assurance practices will meet with Toyota Motor Corporation president Akio Toyoda and other top executives next week in Japan.

While in Japan the panel, led by former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater, will:

- confirm that it is initiating a rigorous peer review of the study of Toyota's electronic throttle control system currently underway by engineering and scientific consulting firm Exponent;
- investigate decision-making and communications processes within Toyota related to quality issues;
- witness how Toyota customers' safety and quality issues are handled and resolved.

"Toyota has promised unfettered access to its executives, quality control experts, systems and data, and so far they have delivered," Mr. Slater said. "We have already seen much of this in North America, and the logical next step is to visualize the entire operation at the global headquarters."

Regarding the peer review of Exponent's study, Mr. Slater said that Toyota and Exponent welcome further scrutiny.

"Our panel includes highly respected safety, quality and engineering experts who are thoroughly exploring Exponent's findings, and we are seeking further study by other independent experts," Mr. Slater said. "Because we are dealing with issues the entire auto industry faces regarding the safety of the driving public, we are not interested in cutting corners."

The panel, formed three weeks ago, has visited to date:

- Toyota's North American manufacturing headquarters in Kentucky, and the Georgetown, Kentucky plant;
- Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. headquarters in California;
- the Longo Toyota dealership in California, where the panel witnessed the remedies for sticky pedals and floor mat entrapment recalls;
- Exponent headquarters in California;
- Design, development and testing processes at Toyota Technical Center operations in Michigan and Arizona.

During these visits the panel met with several Toyota executives including Chief Quality Officer Steve St. Angelo, who will join the panel's meetings in Japan.

“The panel has seen how Mr. St. Angelo is leading a massive Toyota North America effort to improve all aspects of safety and quality. He and the entire Toyota team are keenly focused,” Mr. Slater said. “However, the advisory panel will be direct in its assessment and advice.”

In addition to Mr. Slater, other panel members are:

- Norman Augustine, former chairman and CEO, Lockheed Martin Corporation;
- Patricia Goldman, former vice chairman, National Transportation Safety Board;
- Dr. Mary Good, Dean of Engineering and Information Technology, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and former president, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS);
- Roger Martin, Dean, Rotman School of Management;
- Brian O’Neill, former president, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety;
- Dr. Sheila Widnall, professor, MIT, and former Secretary of the U.S. Air Force.

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