Toyota's Statement Regarding ABC News Broadcast Simulating Electronic Engine Controls

February 22, 2010

Toyota spoke with Mr. Gilbert on February 16 in an effort to understand his concerns. During this discussion, Mr. Gilbert explained that he had connected a resistor between the output wires of the two accelerator pedal sensors on a Toyota Tundra. In other words, he had artificially introduced an abnormal connection between two otherwise independent signals coming from the accelerator pedal sensors. Mr. Gilbert advised Toyota that he believed that his intentional misdirection of these signals could cause the vehicle to accelerate unexpectedly.

In response to Mr. Gilbert's claim as communicated to Toyota, Toyota confirmed that what Mr. Gilbert described would not cause unintended acceleration to occur. In fact, under the abnormal condition described last week by Mr. Gilbert, if there is a short with low resistance between the two signals, the electronic throttle control system illuminates the "check engine" light and the vehicle enters into a fail-safe mode of engine idle operation. If there is a short with high resistance, outside the range of "check engine" light illumination, the accelerator pedal continues to be responsive to driver input and the vehicle will return to the idle condition when the foot is taken off of the accelerator pedal. Unintended acceleration would not occur.

After watching the story today on ABC News featuring Mr. Gilbert, Toyota was surprised to learn that Mr. Gilbert appears now to be making a different claim regarding the electronic throttle control system and in a vehicle other than as described to Toyota last week. Although it is difficult to tell from the footage used in the story, Mr. Gilbert appears to be introducing a different external and artificial method to manipulate the throttle. In order to set the record straight, Toyota welcomes the opportunity to evaluate the Toyota Avalon shown in today's story and the method by which Mr. Gilbert allegedly caused the vehicle to accelerate unintentionally. We welcome the attendance of ABC News at any such evaluation of this vehicle and Mr. Gilbert's testing.