Toyota Addresses False Claims Regarding 2002 Technical Service Bulletin

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Publicly Available Service Bulletin Addressed Drivability Issue Related to Transmission Torque Converter, Not Electronics or Unintended Acceleration

Allegations Driven by Plaintiff's Attorneys Suing Toyota

TORRANCE, Calif., March 23, 2010 – Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc., (TMS) today addressed false claims regarding a 2002 Technical Service Bulletin (TSB) published by Toyota, as reported by CNN's special investigations unit.

On the CNN segment, plaintiffs' attorneys involved in litigation against Toyota and others, including Clarence Ditlow of the Center for Auto Safety, allege that the 2002 TSB proves Toyota knew of problems in its vehicles' electronic systems that could cause unintended acceleration, and that the company and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) conspired to keep this information from the public. Both claims are patently false.

The 2002 TSB and software release in question were issued to remedy a drivability issue at speeds of between 38 and 42 miles per hour at light throttle. This condition was strictly related to a function internal to the transmission torque converter under certain throttle conditions. It manifested as a slight rocking motion, or surge, while holding steady throttle at the specific speed window. This issue was in no way related to any kind of sustained acceleration.

The term surge has been used across the industry for many years to describe a condition where there is a very slight slow-down and speed-up perception (typically two miles per hour or less) while holding steady throttle at low to moderate speeds.

Powertrain software updates (typically released with TSBs) are designed to eliminate drivability concerns, including surge. Toyota's 2002 TSB software release was not issued to resolve any computer software concerns or problems with the electronic throttle control system and was not related to unintended acceleration.

Drivability concerns related to momentary surges are not unique to Toyota, and nearly every major auto manufacturer has published TSBs to address this type of issue in their vehicles. In the last ten years, nearly 80 TSBs related to this issue with corresponding repairs and/or software updates have been released across the industry.

Mr. Ditlow's claims that the 2002 Toyota TSB is a secret internal document that has not been made public are simply wrong, as are his allegations that Toyota and NHTSA kept this document from the public eye. Federal law requires that TSBs from every vehicle manufacturer be made available to independent service providers and the public. From the published date, the Toyota TSB in question was publicly available through Toyota at https://techinfo.toyota.com as well as through a number of independent and government portals.

This 2002 Toyota TSB has also been previously reported on by other news outlets, and was also publicly discussed by Jim Lentz, President and COO of TMS, during recent Congressional testimony.

Toyota has sold more than 40 million cars and trucks with our electronic throttle control system with intelligence (ETCS-i), and the company is very confident that the system is not the cause of unintended acceleration. Toyota engineers have rigorously and repeatedly tested Toyota's ETCS under both normal and abnormal conditions including electromagnetic interference and have never found a single case of unintended acceleration due to a defect in the system.

Detailed information and answers to questions about issues related to recalls are available to customers at www.toyota.com/recall and at the Toyota Customer Experience Center at 1-800-331-4331.

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