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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEB SITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

ELLEN DONESKI, STAFF DIRECTOR
DAVID SCHWIETERT, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

November 24, 2014

Mr. Shigehisa Takada
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
c/o Takata Corporation, U.S. Headquarters
2500 Takata Drive
Auburn Hills, Michigan 48326

Dear Mr. Takada:

On November 20, 2014, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in the United States Senate held a hearing titled, "Examining Takata Airbag Defects and the Vehicle Recall Process." The hearing examined the circumstances surrounding Takata Corporation's manufacturing, distribution and installation of defective airbags that have been linked to four deaths and dozens of injuries in the United States. The hearing also examined the steps your company is taking to remedy these defects and provide auto manufacturers with adequate replacement parts in order to effectuate their remedial program and protect the American driving public.

At this hearing chaired by Senator Nelson, Mr. Hiroshi Shimizu, Senior Vice President of Global Quality Assurance, testified on behalf of your company. Unfortunately, Mr. Shimizu was unable to satisfactorily answer many of the questions posed to him by Senator Nelson and other Members of the Commerce Committee. Specifically, Mr. Shimizu was unable to provide information regarding the chemical compounds used in Takata's airbags, and whether Takata personnel or internal testing raised concern about the safety of those compounds, as has been widely reported in the news media. In addition, Mr. Shimizu was unable to sufficiently answer many questions about the current production and safety testing of replacement airbags for vehicles currently covered by recalls or safety improvement campaigns. As a result, we still have many significant questions about the circumstances surrounding Takata's manufacturing of defective airbags and their widespread distribution and installation in vehicles sold and driven in the United States.

To help the Committee get answers to these questions, please provide the following information and documents:

1. Copies of any Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA) or other similar defect or suspected defect analyses that refer to or relate to any Takata inflators or air bag component in which propellant combustion occurs more rapidly than intended.

2. All documents that refer to or relate to pre- or post-manufacturing conditions (including but not limited to high humidity) that may result in propellant combustion occurring more rapidly than intended in any inflator manufactured in whole or in part by Takata.
3. All documents that refer to or relate to any Takata inflator that failed to meet product quality standards or specifications of Takata and/or any of its customers.
4. All documents from any Takata customer that allege any product quality defects or failure of specification in the production of air bags or the associated inflators.
5. All documents that refer to mistakes, errors or omissions made in the production of any Takata inflator including, but not limited to, improper welding of inflators, improper sealing of inflators, use of materials that deviated from specifications, and incorporation of contaminated, recycled or improperly compressed or formulated propellant in inflators.
6. All documents that refer or relate to concerns or allegations (regardless of whether or not such concerns or allegations were substantiated) by a Takata employee or contractor that any Takata inflator was defective or improperly manufactured. Your response should include, at a minimum:
 - a March 2011 email from Guillermo Apud titled "Defectos y defectos y defectos!!!!" that stated, when translated into English, "A part that is not welded = one life less, which shows we are not fulfilling the mission," along with all emails replying to or forwarding that email;
 - Any communications from Al Bernat detailing any concerns or allegations that a Takata inflator was defective, improperly manufactured, or failed quality assurance testing;
 - Any communications to, from, or relating to any allegations or discussions by former Takata employees Mark Lillie or Michael Britton regarding safety concerns with ammonium nitrate or any other propellant compounds used in Takata air bag inflators;
 - A copy of the May 2011 internal Takata safety inspection of the Monclova, Mexico production facility and any associated documents; and
 - Any documents related to Takata internal testing of air bags from scrapyards in 2004 that indicated possible defects or improper manufacture of Takata air bag inflators.
7. All documents related to the destruction of any of the documents in Request No. 6. (whether destroyed pursuant to Takata's document retention policy or otherwise).
8. All documents detailing Takata's internal or third-party quality assurance programs in all air bag inflator production facilities including, but not limited to, Takata's LaGrange, Georgia, Moses Lake, Washington, and Monclova, Mexico facilities.

9. All documents relating to any air bag inflator production or quality control issues at the Takata facility in Monclova, Mexico following a 2006 explosion and fire at that facility. At a minimum, this response should address whether this explosion and fire was caused by the ammonium nitrate compound used in Takata air bag inflators, and whether Takata made any changes to the ammonium nitrate compound or its production process following this explosion.
10. All documents that refer or relate to changes in inspections and/or quality control procedures as a result of any problems in Takata's production of inflators, including but not limited to, improper welding of inflators, improper sealing of inflators, use of materials that deviated from specifications, and/or incorporation of contaminated, recycled or improperly compacted or formulated propellant in the inflators.
11. All documents that refer or relate to changes in production or production processes as a result of any problems in Takata's production of inflators, including but not limited to, improper welding of inflators, improper sealing of inflators, use of materials that deviated from specifications, and/or incorporation of contaminated, recycled or improperly compacted or formulated propellant in the inflators.
12. A list of every incident involving a death or injury of which Takata is aware of, by any means (including but not limited to media or Internet reports), in which the death or injury was caused, may have been caused, or allegedly was caused (regardless of whether or not such allegations were substantiated) by a rupturing air bag in a vehicle that contained or may have contained a Takata inflator or air bag component. For every incident, provide the date and location of the incident (including city, state, and physical location of the incident), as well as the make, model, model year, state of registration, and vehicle identification number (VIN) for the vehicle. Also state whether the incident involved a death(s) and/or injuries, and provide the names of the person(s) killed or injured, their position in the vehicle, and a description of the injury or injuries.
13. For every incident identified in your response to Request No. 12, all documents related to Takata's assessment of the incident and any documents that Takata or any outside consultant gathered as part of its investigation of the incident (including, but not limited to, any police accident reports, hospital records, or medical examiner records).
14. A list of every lawsuit filed on or after January 1, 2000 naming Takata as a defendant and alleging that an inflator or air bag component manufactured by Takata was defective and/or caused physical injury or death. For each lawsuit, provide the full case caption (including, but not limited to, case number, court, and jurisdiction).
15. A description of Takata's product tracking processes, including:
 - Any serial numbers or tracking numbers that were placed on Takata air bag inflators or associated air bag components from the period of January 1, 2000, to the present;

- Any inventory tracking, process control or quality verification used for the purposes of identifying potentially defective inflator units and notifying automakers who received the defective units; and
 - Any tracking process used to identify the number of replacement inflator units that have been placed in service.
16. A corporate organizational chart (s) identifying the employees, by name and title, who have been involved in investigating or decision-making concerning rupturing air bags manufactured in whole or part by Takata. At a minimum, please provide organizational charts for 2004, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014.
17. A description of Takata's document retention policies, including for electronic mail.

Takata's Efforts to Manufacture Replacement Airbags

18. A description of Takata's capacity to manufacture replacement airbags, including:
- The number of replacement inflator units Takata is currently producing per day (or per week);
 - The number of replacement inflator units that have been ordered by each customer, the number of units provided to date to each customer, and the anticipated time it will take for Takata to provide remaining replacement inflator units to each customer; and
 - Takata's current production capacity, Takata's ability to expand that capacity, and the amount of time it will take to achieve that expansion.
19. A description of Takata's testing program for replacement inflators, including the dates of testing (completed, in process, or planned), the nature of testing and/or test method, the results of testing, and whether the testing was conducted in-house or through a third-party conformity assessment organization.

Takata's Use of Ammonium Nitrate in Airbags

20. A description of when Takata began using ammonium nitrate as a propellant in its airbags.
21. A copy of the United States Council for Automotive Research (USCAR) inflator specification that was applicable to Takata's US airbags for each year starting with the specification that was in place 5 years before Takata began using ammonium nitrate in its airbags and ending 5 years after Takata began using ammonium nitrate in its airbags.
22. For the 10-year timeframe described in item 21 above, all documents related to efforts to re-design Takata airbags or change the inflator specification therefor that were intended to, could have had, or did have the effect of lowering the cost of manufacturing the airbags.

23. For the 10-year timeframe described in item 21 above, a table that includes:
- The model number of each Takata airbag type manufactured during that year;
 - The chemical composition of the propellant used in that model;
 - A list of vehicle makes/models in the U.S. that utilized that airbag model, along with whether the model was used as a passenger or driver-side airbag, and the numbers of airbags provided by Takata for each make/model;
 - The cost per unit of each airbag model sold for each automobile make/model for which the airbag was sold in the U.S.
 - For each airbag model, the maximum amount of moisture the Takata generant can absorb before the generant's performance changes, presented as a graph of pressure vs time for varying amounts of moisture.
 - For each airbag model, the amount of time it would take for the Takata generant to absorb the maximum amount of moisture referenced above in 100% relative humidity;
 - The Design Failure Mode Effects Analysis document associated with each airbag model.
24. All documents Takata prepared for NHTSA in response to RQ09-004 but never submitted to NHTSA.

We ask that you provide this information by December 12, 2014. The Committee is requesting this information under the authority of Senate Rules XXV and XXVI. An attachment to this letter provides additional information about how to respond to the Committee's request. If you have any questions, please contact Christian Tamotsu Fjeld (202-224-1270) or Peter Curtin (202-224-1300) of the Committee staff.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller, IV
Chairman



Bill Nelson
Chairman, Science and Space Subcommittee