

Testimony of David Kelly, Project Director
Independent Testing Coalition
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance and Data Security Subcommittee
March 20, 2018

Thank you for the invitation to appear before the committee to discuss the activities of the Independent Testing Coalition (ITC). The ITC is comprised of the 10 automakers affected by the original NHTSA recall - BMW, FCA US f/k/a Chrysler Group, Honda, Ford, General Motors, Mitsubishi, Mazda, Nissan, Subaru and Toyota. The ITC is committed to conducting an independent and comprehensive investigation of the technical issues associated with Takata airbag inflators. We look forward to the results of this process as we focus on ensuring the safety, security and peace of mind of all affected motorists. ITC members support a scientific, engineering analysis, and will not pre-judge the process or its outcomes.

This coalition began work a little more than three years ago. The work was designed in two separate tasks. First, we set out to find the root cause of the problem. In March 2016, we delivered those results to NHTSA, Takata, Congress and the media. The ITC was the first entity to deliver a definitive root cause, requiring all 3 of the following factors:

- The presence of pressed phase stabilized ammonium nitrate propellant without moisture-absorbing desiccant,
- Long term exposure to repeated high temperature cycling in the presence of moisture, and
- An inflator assembly that does not adequately prevent moisture intrusion in high humidity.

The second phase of the project has been dedicated into developing a predictive aging model for certain, desiccated inflators. This part of the project has been ongoing since 2016 and we expect to be able to release those findings soon.

We believe the testing we are conducting is the most expansive independent testing to date on desiccated inflators. We will have completed 10,000 tests on more than 1,500 inflators. Orbital ATK engineers will complete more than 60,000 hours when the project concludes. These inflators come from five different design types, with multiple variants within those inflator types. Our tests have included aging tests, dissection and disassembly, computed tomography (CT) scanning and propellant testing. We will continue to share relevant data with NHTSA and Takata as our testing progresses. During this phase of the project, we have already met with NHTSA, Takata and Congress as we had information to report. Because of the nature of the testing, we do not always have a steady stream of data to report.

I think it is important to make several points about what to expect in our final report. First, we will not be making a definitive statement regarding the safety of desiccated inflators. That was

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never the goal or intent of the ITC. What we will do is provide all of our data to decision makers and allow them to make the proper policy decisions.

Second, since we will be producing a predictive aging model, we will not be making any additional statements about the safety of any particular inflator.

Finally, I want to assure everyone that we will be publishing our test results and data in a final report that will be released to the public. This has been a promise of the ITC from the beginning and we will follow through on that promise.

Thank you.