

CENTER FOR AUTO SAFETY

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November 25, 2004

Dieter Zetsche
President & Chief Executive Officer
DaimlerChrysler Corporation
1000 Chrysler Drive
Auburn Hills MI 48326-2766

Dear Mr. Zetsche:

Today is a day of Thanksgiving for most Americans – but not for owners of 1998-2002 Dodge and Chrysler vehicles with 2.7-liter V6 engines. They have been stuck with lemon engines that often fail catastrophically and always with an economic slam. The Center for Auto Safety (CAS) has received almost 500 complaints of 2.7L engine failure, more than twice as many as on 1997-2002 Toyota vehicles with sludging 2.2 and 3.0L engines. On a sales weighted basis, CAS has five times as many complaints on Chrysler 2.7L oil sludge than on Toyota.

On this Thanksgiving day, Toyota owners can be thankful for the 8 year, unlimited mileage warranty Toyota gave to aid their oil sludge woes. So can VW and Audi owners who got the same 8 year, unlimited mileage warranty for oil sludge. Mercedes owners can be thankful for the 10 year, unlimited mileage warranty Mercedes gave to aid their oil sludge woes. Chrysler 2.7L vehicle owners have nothing to be thankful for as Chrysler has given them nothing but grief.

Consider the emotional distress Darla Wilson of Jacksonville FL went through when the 2.7L engine on her 1999 Intrepid failed (despite 3,000 mile oil changes) at 49,000 miles on the way to a funeral.

On October 24, 2004 I was driving my friend, her daughter and granddaughter from Jacksonville, FL to Jackson, MS to attend the memorial service for her fiancée who had passed away suddenly. We were almost 25 miles from Mobile, AL when suddenly and without warning the engine began to knock. I immediately pulled off the road and barely made it when the engine stopped completely. We had to wait over an hour for AAA to pick us up and he had to make 2 trips because the law doesn't allow him to have more than 2 passengers in his truck. It was a Sunday and all local car rental offices were closed except for those at the airport. The tow truck driver dropped my friends off at a truck stop, took my car to the local Dodge dealership where we had to leave it outside the gate because it was closed and then took me on to the airport. I got a rental car, drove back to the dealership, unloaded all the suitcases out of my car and put it in the rental, drove the 25 miles back to get my friends. This took almost 4 hours and you can imagine the mental and emotional turmoil that we were going through, especially my friend who had suffered such a tremendous and heart wrenching loss. When I found out the following day that my car's engine was dead I called Enterprise and was told I had to return the car to the Mobile Airport as they do not have one-way rentals. We had to drive back to the Mobile Airport on our way to Jacksonville unload and drop off the Enterprise car pick up a Hertz rental and load that. Everyone was already fatigued and exhausted from all the emotional distress of the past few days. Now I also have to figure out how to get my car home and repaired.

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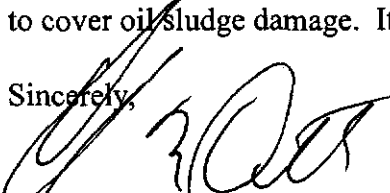
DaimlerChrysler's response to date has been to stonewall and deny there is a problem on Chrysler vehicles but to take care of Mercedes vehicles. It is this combination of stonewalling Chrysler owners about safety and reliability while providing better customer care and safety to Mercedes owners that led to a \$98 million punitive damage award against DaimlerChrysler this week in Tennessee when a collapsing front seat killed 8-month old Joshua Flax in a child seat behind it. What DaimlerChrysler does for its German half, whether it's oil sludge or strong seat backs, it must do for its American half.

To condemn Chrysler owners to the torture of the company's voice mail system shows the insincerity and ineptness of the company's response. It not only does deny compensation for Chrysler's engineering mistakes but also angers consumers so that they will not buy Chrysler vehicles in the future.

Take time out of your Thanksgiving to read some of your 2.7L customer letters. See for yourself the anguish of your customers over 2.7L engine oil sludge and ask why are our engines in similar vehicle not suffering from oil sludge? It's not the consumers who are "defective" in following maintenance schedules; it's the 2.7L engine. Ask what changes Chrysler made in the 2.7L engine when it went from a 3 year/36,000 mile warranty in 2002 to a 7 year/70,000 mile warranty in 2003 to prevent the below 70,000 mile failures so common in 1998-2002 models? Ask why Toyota, Volkswagen and yes, Mercedes, owners are given extended warranties for engine oil sludge damage but not 2.7L Chrysler owners?

Give your Chrysler customers a reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving. Extend their warranties to cover oil sludge damage. It's the right thing to do.

Sincerely,



Clarence M. Ditlow
Executive Director