

April 15, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

Congratulations on assembling your Cabinet to lead the agencies and departments that make up the front lines in helping rebuild U.S. infrastructure. We are writing to bring your attention to a consumer protection issue these leaders can address immediately — the use and sale of dangerous recalled vehicles by the federal government. This practice endangers the lives of tens of thousands of federal employees, and all who share the roadway environment with them.

America loses more than 40,000 community members, and nearly 3 million more are injured, each year because of preventable vehicle crashes. These tragedies also produce economic consequences [with societal costs estimated at nearly \\$1 trillion annually](#). Preliminary data suggests road safety is getting worse, with an estimated 42,060 crash related fatalities in 2020, representing a 24% increase in the fatality rate from the previous 12 months. As you know all too well, these are not just numbers — each life is someone's family member, friend, and neighbor. And each tragedy brings lifelong pain and devastation for their loved ones.

One immediately available means to prevent vehicle crashes from injuring or killing drivers, passengers, pedestrians, or bicyclists is to remove dangerous recalled vehicles from our roads until they can be repaired.

Unrepaired recalled vehicles have already killed and injured too many. Defective airbags, fire-prone fuel tanks, faulty tires, and malfunctioning ignition switches are defects that have led to recalls. Too often, however, vehicles remain in use even once they have been recalled. [In 2020, there were 55 million vehicles on U.S. roads](#), subject to recall but remaining unrepaired.

Stunningly, there is no specific prohibition on the continued use of unrepaired, dangerous, recalled vehicles by federal personnel. [An independent investigation found more than 25,000 of these unsafe vehicles](#) being driven every day by federal employees across the government, often without their knowledge. At the end of federal leases, these same unsafe vehicles with unrepaired defects are then offered for sale to consumers, passing the danger onto them and all road users.

We are grateful for your entire Administration's commitment to road safety. [We urge you to direct all departments and agencies to end the unsafe practice of federal employees using unrepaired recalled vehicles and prohibit the public sale of unrepaired recalled federal vehicles.](#)

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important consumer protection and safety matter.

Yours,

Center for Auto Safety
American Federation of Government Employees
National Treasury Employees Union

National Federation of Federal Employees
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
National Safety Council
National Consumers League
Consumer Federation of America
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety
Joan Claybrook, Former NHTSA Administrator
Consumer Watchdog
Public Citizen
National Association of Consumer Advocates
U.S. PIRG
MASS PIRG
Consumer Reports

cc: Katy Kale, General Services Administration
cc: The Honorable Lloyd Austin, Department of Defense
cc: The Honorable Louis DeJoy, United States Postal Service
cc: The Honorable Merrick Garland, Department of Justice
cc: The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Department of Homeland Security
cc: The Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Department of Energy
cc: The Honorable Denis McDonough, Department of Veterans Affairs
cc: The Honorable Deb Haaland, Department of the Interior
cc: The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Department of Transportation
cc: Representative Carolyn B. Maloney
cc: Representative James Comer
cc: Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi
cc: Representative Michael Cloud
cc: Senator Gary Peters
cc: Senator Rob Portman