

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2014

David J. Friedman,
Acting Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington DC 20590-9898

Dear Administrator Friedman,

I write you today in response to a troubling article I read in the March 8th edition of *The New York Times* entitled "Auto Regulators Dismissed Defect Tied to 13 Deaths." I was deeply disappointed to learn that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) apparently failed to sufficiently investigate reports of dangerous malfunctions in model years 2004 and 2005 General Motors (GM) vehicles even after dozens of citizens requested they do so.

NHTSA's apparent failure to appropriately investigate these reports is unacceptable. If numerous media reports are correct, NHTSA's inaction allowed hundreds of thousands of unsafe vehicles to continue operating on America's motorways and exposed millions of drivers to unnecessary danger which ultimately resulted in horrific and untimely deaths.

One tragic incident that might have been prevented was the death of Pennsylvania resident Kelly Erin Ruddy, age 21, who was killed after she lost control of her 2005 Chevy Cobalt on January 10, 2010. Kelly's passing was a tremendous loss to her family and friends. Kelly's parents, Leo and Mary Theresa Ruddy, felt obligated to contact the proper authorities to ensure an investigation of the safety of Kelly's vehicle. They promptly filed multiple complaints with NHTSA. I was shocked to learn that, despite the tragic accident and repeated attempts by Leo and Mary Theresa to make contact, no one from NHTSA ever reached out to speak with them about their concerns. Instead, NHTSA sent impersonal form letters with boilerplate language stating that the agency was uninterested in investigating the issue further.

NHTSA's failure to fully investigate the complaints submitted by Leo and Mary Theresa Ruddy – including neglecting to speak to them about their concerns – is inexcusable. Please confirm in your response to this letter your personal commitment to initiate a thorough investigation of Ms. Ruddy's death and an explanation as to why it reportedly took so long for NHTSA to act on the dozens of complaints it received about model year 2004 and 2005 GM vehicles. Such a commitment and explanation are the least NHTSA can do to help Mr. & Mrs. Ruddy, and to all citizens who were ignored after contacting NHTSA hoping to prevent further tragic deaths.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Pat Toomey
United States Senator