



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

AUG 19 2002

Mr. Michael Brooks
Legal Staff
Center for Auto Safety
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 330
Washington, DC 20009-5708

NSA-10.01 mjj
Ref. # 566788

Dear Mr. Brooks:

Dr. Jeffrey Runge has asked me to respond to your letter dated July 10, 2002, with respect to the documents submitted by Ford Motor Company (Ford) in response to an information request from the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) dated December 14, 2001, as part of its investigation of post-crash fires in Ford Crown Victoria vehicles (SQ01-014). You also have raised concerns about the public file for that investigation.

You characterize the SQ01-014 public file as "sketchy and incomplete." As you know, during the course of ODI defect investigations, the public files generally contain only the opening resume, letters from ODI to the manufacturer (and possibly other manufacturers), and the public portions of responses to those letters. Due to resource limitations, when ODI receives a voluminous amount of documents from a manufacturer, it often places only the cover letter into the public file, and it makes the enclosures available only upon request. The public file for SQ01-014 is similar to other investigative files in this respect. Ford's letter responding to ODI's information request of December 14, 2001, identifies the enclosures, and anyone perusing the file can readily determine that there are enclosures that have not been placed in the public file. Thus, documents have not been "secreted," and there has been no effort to "mislead members of the public."

Your analogy to the submission of information by the General Motors Corporation (GM) during this investigation is not appropriate. GM, in its response to an ODI information request, submitted approximately 600 pages. Ford, on the other hand, submitted 6 boxes of documents. There are a total of 39 bound "books" (estimated to contain over 15,000 pages) and 17 VHS tapes.



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When there is a request from the public to review extensive manufacturer submissions, ODI goes through the documents page-by-page to remove not only the information that has been found to be confidential at the request of the manufacturer, but also any personal identifiers contained in the documents. As I am sure you can appreciate, this is a very time-consuming procedure, and we do not do it unless there has been a request from the public. Since you have requested the Ford documents, ODI has begun this task. We anticipate that it will be completed by October 31, 2002.

If further assistance is needed, please contact Ms. Kathleen C. DeMeter, Director of NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation, at (202) 366-2850.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth N. Weinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator
for Safety Assurance