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Chairman Towns Hits Toyota For Lack of Disclosure ***Oversight Committee Obtains Troubling Documents from former Toyota Lawyer***

WASHINGTON – Chairman Edolphus “Ed” Towns (D-NY) announced that a review of documents obtained under [subpoena](#) from a former senior lawyer at Toyota indicate Toyota deliberately withheld records that it was legally required to produce in response to discovery orders in litigation. Many of these documents concern “rollover” cases in which a driver or passenger was injured, including cases where victims were paralyzed.

The former Toyota lawyer, Dimitrios Biller, was Managing Counsel in the Product Liability Group of Toyota Motor Sales, USA (TMS), from April 2003 to September 2007. In this position, Mr. Biller led the defense of some of the largest tort cases filed against Toyota, including “rollover” cases involving seriously injured victims. Chairman Towns subpoenaed Mr. Biller’s documents on Thursday, February 18, 2010. Earlier this month, news reports surfaced regarding accusations Biller had made regarding Toyota’s efforts to hide “evidence of safety defects from consumers and regulators, and fostered a culture of ‘hypocrisy and deceit.’”

Included in the documents is a memo, authored by Biller to his superiors at Toyota, noting that Toyota has failed to produce any emails or other electronic records in response to discovery orders. Additionally, the Committee has found multiple references to secret “Books of Knowledge” that were kept in electronic form, in which Toyota engineers kept their design and testing data across all vehicle lines and for all vehicle parts. The Committee now has evidence that Toyota entered into multi-million dollar settlements in tort cases where they feared that the plaintiff’s lawyer was getting close to discovering the existence of the “Books of Knowledge.”

In a letter to Mr. Yoshimi Inaba, President and CEO, Toyota North America, Chairman Towns asks Mr. Inaba to respond to the Biller documents and the serious issues they raise. Specifically, the Chairman asks Mr. Inaba to personally review Mr. Biller’s records and provide a response to his allegations. Mr. Inaba [testified](#) before the Committee on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 during the hearing, “Toyota Gas Pedals: Is the Public at Risk?”

Chairman Towns wrote, "In sum, the Biller documents indicate a systematic disregard for the law and routine violation of court discovery orders in litigation. People injured in crashes involving Toyota vehicles may have been injured a second time when Toyota failed to produce relevant evidence in court. Moreover, this also raises very serious questions as to whether Toyota has also withheld substantial, relevant information from NHTSA."

Chairman Towns asks for a response from Mr. Inaba by 12:00 noon on Friday, March 12, 2010.

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Documents and Links

[Letter from Chairman Edolphus Towns to Yoshimi Inaba](#)