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February 8, 2010

The Honorable Edolphus Towns
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Towns,

In preparation for this week's hearing on Toyota's recent recalls and the impact on consumer safety, serious questions have been raised about how long Toyota and federal regulators have known about problems of unintended acceleration in Toyota model vehicles. Evidence suggests that for nearly a decade, both Toyota and officials at the National Highway Transportation Security Administration (NHTSA) were aware of complaints related to unintended acceleration.

As the agency responsible for ensuring the safety and reliability of automobiles sold and driven in the United States, it is vital that NHTSA is operating in an effective and responsible manner. But with unresolved complaints documenting incidents of unintended acceleration in Toyota model vehicles as early as 2003, I have serious concerns about the agency's actions under the previous administration.

I agree it is important to hear from current administration officials to better understand how the government has responded to the current recalls however; the pattern of negligence extends beyond the tenure of those currently in positions of authority. In order to better understand how federal officials responded to complaints of unintended acceleration and to further our ongoing investigation into the federal government's role in ensuring motor vehicle safety, I feel it is important to hear from officials from the previous administration responsible for overseeing these activities.

Therefore, I request that you expand the upcoming hearing to include:

- Norman Mineta- Secretary of Transportation (2001-2006)
- Mary Peters- Secretary of Transportation (2006-2008)

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- Nicole Nason- Administrator, National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (2006-2008)
- David Kelly- Administrator, National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (2008-2009)

If you believe that these officials will not fit into the structure of Wednesday's hearing, then I must request that we hold a hearing the following week to receive their testimony.

This Committee has a responsibility to make sure that the relationship and interaction between the federal government and industry is providing adequate protection for American consumers. Without the testimony of former administration officials in charge when numerous consumer complaints went unnoticed or unresolved, the Committee will lack the clarity of information needed to understand how this problem evolved and can be prevented in the future.

Thank you for your prompt attention and if you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Kristina Moore or John Ohly with Committee Staff at (202) 225-5074.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Ranking Member