

December 5, 2015

Mary Barra
Chief Executive Officer
General Motors
300 Renaissance Centre
Detroit, MI 48265,

Re: GM adding same safety technology to all vehicles made and sold anywhere per UN Car Safety Regulations

Dear Ms. Barra:

We write as American consumer organizations with a history of working on auto safety. We wish to reference the recent letter you received from Consumers International, which is attached here.

We were surprised and disappointed to learn from our consumer colleagues in Latin America of the poor performance of General Motors' (GM) in auto safety tests conducted by the New Car Assessment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (Latin NCAP). These results are directly related to GM's failure to provide the same safety technologies on cars sold in Latin America as the company provides as standard equipment in cars sold in the US market. We are specifically referring to basic safety features, such as airbags, but also newer life-saving technologies like electronic stability control and pre-tensioned seat belts, all of which are fitted as standard on GM vehicles in the US.

Indeed, the Chevrolet Aveo received a zero rating in Latin NCAP's most recent independent crash test results, and was described as representing a "high risk of life threatening injury" in Latin America. In addition, the Chevrolet brand has shown the poorest performance of all the major global car manufacturers tested by Latin NCAP since 2010. The basic model of the Aveo available to consumers in Latin American countries - such as Mexico (where the car is both manufactured and the top-selling model)- lacks even basic safety features, such as airbags, putting occupants at great risk. We find that information shocking.

As American consumers, we appreciate the enhanced protections these technologies provide in saving lives and preventing injuries in the US. But we find it hard to fathom that GM would not provide all consumers – no matter where they live around the world – with these same protective technologies.

Auto safety cannot only be for citizens living in wealthy countries; yet GM's practice of providing some consumers with the best safety technologies, while not even providing airbags to others, strikes us as a morally indefensible decision. Ms. Barra, GM is not alone in this practice, but in your capacity as CEO you have stated your commitment to auto safety technologies and doing right by consumers, and we think this is an issue that deserves your attention.

Just last month, on the occasion of the 2nd Global High Level Conference on Road Safety, governments from around the world adopted a declaration for all new motor vehicles to meet minimum safety regulations:

“Promote the adoption of policies and measures to implement United Nations vehicle safety regulations or equivalent national standards to ensure that all new motor vehicles meet applicable minimum regulations for occupant and other road users protection, with seat belts, air bags and active safety systems such as anti-lock braking system (ABS) and electronic stability control (ESC) fitted as standard.”

At this propitious time, we are calling on each of the world’s largest car manufacturers to commit to comply with the UN Vehicle Safety regulations for all new cars, regardless of where they are sold.

This is particularly relevant to General Motors, as Latin NCAP has ranked it 8th out of 11 leading car manufacturers in Latin America, in terms of safety, and is the worst performing of any global manufacturer.

This disparity in access to safety technologies has real consequences, with an unacceptable burden of road crash deaths and injuries highlighted by the World Health Organization and referenced by Consumers International in its letter.

The WHO has reported that:

- 1.3 million people died and 50 million people were injured on roads in 2013. Unsafe cars are a major contributor to this statistic. 50% of those affected were vehicle occupants. This disparity in access to safety technologies has real consequences, and contributes to unacceptable burden of road crash deaths and injuries highlighted by the World Health Organization and referenced by Consumers International in its letter.
- Road traffic deaths are now the 9th biggest killer globally, and are predicted to become the 7th biggest killer worldwide by 2030 unless urgent action is taken.

The top ten car manufacturers accounted for 78% of all cars produced in 2013. It is clear that manufacturers like GM have an essential role to play in reducing traffic fatalities and injuries.

The US is today one of the world leaders in providing consumers access to state-of-the-art safety equipment on all of our cars. As CEO, you can demonstrate to all consumers concern for their safety and play a leading role in ensuring all vehicles comply with these safety standards regardless of where they are sold. Applying these regulations voluntarily will help increase trust and confidence worldwide in the safety of your cars, and most importantly, save many thousands of lives.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns. We would be happy to discuss further with you or your staff.

Yours Sincerely,

Ellen Bloom
Senior Director, Federal Policy and Washington Office, Consumers Union
Consumer Reports

Robert Weissman
President
Public Citizen

Jackie Gillan
President
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

Sally Greenberg
Executive Director
National Consumers League