



The Honorable Patrick J. Diegnan Jr.  
New Jersey Senate Transportation Committee  
State House Annex  
P.O. Box 068  
Trenton, NJ 08625

June 3, 2022

**Re: Support for Senate Bill 2004 (Improving Vehicle Recall Completion Rates)**

Dear Chairman Diegnan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for providing a hearing on Senate Bill 2004. It is an honor for Stellantis to express their support for this important vehicle safety recall repair legislation.

Stellantis is a leading global automaker and mobility provider with thousands of employees across the globe. Stellantis was formed in January 2021 with the merger of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and PSA Group. Our product portfolio features 14 vehicle brands, including iconic names such as Chrysler, Dodge Jeep, and Ram. In 2021, our global production was 5.8 million vehicles and more than 1.8 million of those vehicles were built here in North America.

The safety and security of those who drive and ride in Stellantis vehicles is of utmost importance and that is why we are supporting Senate Bill 2004. This bill would create a process by which owners are notified of outstanding safety recalls when their vehicle registrations expire and require all available safety recalls to be repaired before their next registration renewal. All such repairs are provided free of charge.

Temporary exemptions would be provided if recall remedies are not yet available; for vehicle owners who must obtain additional repairs before recall remedies can be applied; and for vehicle owners experiencing undue hardship that prevents them from addressing outstanding recalls.

According to NHTSA, there were more than 1,000 new safety recalls in 2021 across all manufacturers. These campaigns impacted more than 35 million vehicles and components nationwide. Some recalls, such as the Takata airbag campaign, involve defective parts that may pose life-threatening risks to drivers and passengers. While automakers steadfastly notify vehicle owners of recalls and provide free repairs at authorized dealerships, regardless of whether the vehicles were purchased from a dealer, millions of recalled vehicles go unrepaired each year.



For example, in 2014, NHTSA oversaw the start of what has become the largest automotive recall in history. Approximately 67 million defective Takata airbag inflators, found in vehicles from 19 different automakers have now been recalled. These airbag inflators can cause serious injury or death if they rupture. Yet, as of April 2022, over 10 million inflators hadn't been repaired and more than 157,000 vehicles registered in New Jersey have unrepaired Takata airbag recalls. While many owners have acted and had their vehicles repaired, relying on voluntary recall repair compliance is not enough to protect all vehicle users. Senate Bill 2004 will create a process that will ensure recalls are addressed to help keep New Jerseyans safe.

The risks associated with unrepaired vehicle safety recalls are even greater for low-income communities, communities of color, and rural communities because of lower recall awareness and higher barriers to obtaining service. According to 2022 recall data, regions of New Jersey with the largest numbers of open airbag recalls also have higher percentages of populations living in poverty, compared with the state average. This is despite significant efforts by Stellantis to find and motivate all owners to act.

Additionally, national data from Stellantis shows that when comparing ZIP codes with at least 500 open airbag recalls, Latino populations are 38 percentage points higher than the national average, and non-English speaking populations are 20 percentage points higher.

There could be multiple reasons for this trend. If these populations are driving older or used vehicles, or if their housing situation changes frequently, automakers are less likely to have current contact information, meaning drivers may not receive vehicle notices. This is especially true when drivers take their vehicles to independent repair facilities and lose contact with automakers and dealers.

One of the ways Stellantis has attempted to increase recall awareness is by founding and continuing to support the National Safety Council's Check To Protect program. The goal of this program is to make awareness of safety recalls a routine part of vehicle ownership, similar to regular use and maintenance such as checking tire pressure, washer fluid, or engine oil levels in your vehicle. Anyone can check the recall status of a vehicle at [CheckToProtect.org](https://www.checktoprotect.org). Recall awareness alone however does not guarantee recall completion. Owners may have other individual obstacles to recall completion, may not prioritize these important repairs, or not go to a dealer because of the misconception that they may have to pay for this repair.

Additionally, on-the-ground outreach efforts have revealed some people believe recalls may not affect them or that the repairs may negatively affect the value of their vehicles. Data collected from some Latino population suggest they view some safety defects as acceptable if day-to-day vehicle operation is unaffected. They do not recognize that recalls present a more serious safety risk than regular vehicle wear-and-tear or may not trust that the repair will be free. In some lower income communities, we have found some people confuse recalls with repossession, so they take no action.

Again, relying on voluntary recall repair compliance will not protect the communities at greatest risk of injury or death from recalled vehicle equipment. Therefore, safety recall repair legislation is critical to



increasing completion rates, particularly in hard-to-reach communities. Leveraging registration renewal to raise awareness of open recalls equally for all people, will not just increase recall compliance. It will remove the inherent risks associated with driving defective vehicles.

In closing, Stellantis joins dealers, insurance companies, the injury-prevention community, and the Alliance for Automotive Innovation in support of Senate Bill 2004 and urges New Jersey state legislators to back this bill to protect their constituents and help keep New Jersey roads safe for everyone.

If you have any questions, or if Stellantis can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me, or visit our website at [recalls.mopar.com](http://recalls.mopar.com). Thank you again for your time and interest in this important safety issue.

Sincerely,

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