

# CENTER FOR AUTO SAFETY

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November 17, 2011

Sergio Marchionne, Chairman  
Chrysler Group LLC  
1000 Chrysler Drive  
Auburn Hills MI 48321-8004

Dear Chairman Marchionne:

On September 1, 2011, [the Center for Auto Safety \(CAS\) asked you to recall](#) all 1993-04 Jeep Grand Cherokees for fuel fed fires in rear impacts that have claimed far more lives than the infamous Ford Pinto. Just yesterday, November 16, the [Jeep Grand Cherokee claimed yet another life](#) and [severely burned another person on I4 in Orlando FL](#). If Chrysler had recalled the 1993-04 Grand Cherokee as CAS requested or as Ralph Nader requested in January 2011, the Orlando Grand Cherokee occupants would not have been burned. The tragic question is how many more fatal fire crashes will it take before Chrysler recalls this Pinto for soccer moms. The known toll now stands at 185 fatal fire crashes with 270 deaths and numerous burn injuries. At the time of its recall, NHTSA reported only 28 deaths in fire crashes of Ford Pintos.

[Chrysler responded to CAS' request to recall the Grand Cherokee](#) and save lives with a letter long on rhetoric and short on facts from Chrysler's recall manager. (See attachment A.) Nowhere does Chrysler address the fact that NHTSA FARS data show the Grand Cherokee has a fatal rear impact fire death rate 20 times higher than the Ford Explorer. Nowhere does Chrysler address the fact that crash tests done by FHWA and CAS show the Grand Cherokee suffered catastrophic fuel system failures at energy levels both significantly below and slightly above present FMVSS 301 levels. Nowhere does Chrysler address the fact the 70 mph FHWA crash test on a Ford Explorer had an energy level nearly twice that of FMVSS 301 and suffered no breach of the fuel system. (See Table below.)

Test	Impactor	Impactor Weight	Impactor Speed	Crash Energy
old FMVSS 301	flat face barrier	4,000 pounds	30 mph	121,000 lb-ft
new FMVSS 301	contoured barrier	3,015 pounds	50 mph	253,000 lb-ft
FHWA Explorer	2003 Taurus sedan	3,110 pounds	68 mph	483,000 lb-ft
FHWA Grand Cher.	2000 Taurus SW	3,296 pounds	49.7 mph	274,000 lb-ft
First Karco test	1987 Taurus sedan	3,387 pounds	51.4 mph	301,000 lb-ft
Second Karco test	1988 Taurus sedan	3,364 pounds	40.7 mph	187,000 lb-ft

Chrysler's failure to respond to CAS' request to recall the Grand Cherokee and save lives is inexplicable other than as a defensive tactic in view of the cooperative relationship between Chrysler and CAS in the past. In 1992, [CAS conducted an independent crash test of a 1993 Chrysler L/H sedan provided by Chrysler](#) at a DOT approved test facility. (Attachment B.) If

Chrysler accepted our crash test then, why not accept our crash tests now, all done at DOT approved facilities.

In December 1990 CAS asked then Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca to take responsibility for A-604 Ultradrive transmission failures by redesigning it and helping consumers who had already bought one of these lemons. In response Mr. Iacocca personally came to Washington to meet with CAS. Chrysler Vice President Theodore Cunningham made specific, public promises from Chrysler to repair all Ultradrive transmissions, waive the \$100 deductible in the warranty, provide loaners, buy back any 1989-91 models with Ultradrives that could not be fixed and to improve the quality of the Ultradrive in future models. At the same [Chrysler invited CAS Executive Director Clarence Ditlow to make a presentation](#) to Chrysler's Board of Directors on safety and consumer issues. (Attachment C.)

Our September 1, 2011 letter to you said: "As the CEO of the new Chrysler Group LLC who has spoken out about the social responsibility of leaders not to close their eyes to problems but to find solutions, the Center for Auto Safety and the families of victims call on you to recall all 1993-04 Jeep Grand Cherokees and remedy the defects in their fuel systems so this defect does not claim any more victims." The Orlando Grand Cherokee crash on November 16 shows our prediction was correct. How many more people will be killed and tragically burned in Grand Cherokee fire crashes before Chrysler agrees to a recall? As outlined by Ralph Nader to Fiat Chief Engineer Harald Wester in Milano, Italy on January 26, the recall remedy is simple and inexpensive.

*Just like Ford recalled the Pinto, Fiat needs to recall the Grand Cherokee and remedy the fuel tank defect by installing (1) an optional frame rail reinforcement bracket on the 1993-1998 Grand Cherokee, (2) optional skid plates on all 1993-2004 Grand Cherokees that do not have them, (3) an effective check valve system to shut off the flow of gasoline if the filler hose is pulled out of the fuel tank or filler neck, and (4) additional shields to protect the fuel tank from sharp objects in the crush zone impacts. To ensure these inexpensive remedies are adequate, Fiat should conduct a public crash test program just as was done for the Ford Pinto recall.*

Once again, the Center for Auto Safety asks you as Chrysler's CEO to do the right thing and recall the 1993-2004 Jeep Grand Cherokee.

Sincerely,



Clarence Ditlow  
Executive Director