

April 15, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

Congratulations on assembling your Cabinet to lead the agencies and departments that make up the front lines in helping rebuild U.S. infrastructure. We are writing to bring your attention to a consumer protection issue these leaders can address immediately — the use and sale of dangerous recalled vehicles by the federal government. This practice endangers the lives of tens of thousands of federal employees, and all who share the roadway environment with them.

America loses more than 40,000 community members, and nearly 3 million more are injured, each year because of preventable vehicle crashes. These tragedies also produce economic consequences [with societal costs estimated at nearly \\$1 trillion annually](#). Preliminary data suggests road safety is getting worse, with an estimated 42,060 crash related fatalities in 2020, representing a 24% increase in the fatality rate from the previous 12 months. As you know all too well, these are not just numbers — each life is someone's family member, friend, and neighbor. And each tragedy brings lifelong pain and devastation for their loved ones.

One immediately available means to prevent vehicle crashes from injuring or killing drivers, passengers, pedestrians, or bicyclists is to remove dangerous recalled vehicles from our roads until they can be repaired.

Unrepaired recalled vehicles have already killed and injured too many. Defective airbags, fire-prone fuel tanks, faulty tires, and malfunctioning ignition switches are defects that have led to recalls. Too often, however, vehicles remain in use even once they have been recalled. [In 2020, there were 55 million vehicles on U.S. roads](#), subject to recall but remaining unrepaired.

Stunningly, there is no specific prohibition on the continued use of unrepaired, dangerous, recalled vehicles by federal personnel. [An independent investigation found more than 25,000 of these unsafe vehicles](#) being driven every day by federal employees across the government, often without their knowledge. At the end of federal leases, these same unsafe vehicles with unrepaired defects are then offered for sale to consumers, passing the danger onto them and all road users.

We are grateful for your entire Administration's commitment to road safety. [We urge you to direct all departments and agencies to end the unsafe practice of federal employees using unrepaired recalled vehicles and prohibit the public sale of unrepaired recalled federal vehicles.](#)

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important consumer protection and safety matter.

Yours,

Center for Auto Safety  
American Federation of Government Employees  
National Treasury Employees Union

National Federation of Federal Employees  
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety  
National Safety Council  
National Consumers League  
Consumer Federation of America  
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety  
Joan Claybrook, Former NHTSA Administrator  
Consumer Watchdog  
Public Citizen  
National Association of Consumer Advocates  
U.S. PIRG  
MASS PIRG  
Consumer Reports

cc: Katy Kale, General Services Administration  
cc: The Honorable Lloyd Austin, Department of Defense  
cc: The Honorable Louis DeJoy, United States Postal Service  
cc: The Honorable Merrick Garland, Department of Justice  
cc: The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Department of Homeland Security  
cc: The Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Department of Energy  
cc: The Honorable Denis McDonough, Department of Veterans Affairs  
cc: The Honorable Deb Haaland, Department of the Interior  
cc: The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Department of Transportation  
cc: Representative Carolyn B. Maloney  
cc: Representative James Comer  
cc: Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi  
cc: Representative Michael Cloud  
cc: Senator Gary Peters  
cc: Senator Rob Portman