



J. Michael Clára
Salt Lake City School Board
District Two

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27 August 2014

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DELIVERED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. Ric Willard, Safety Defects Engineer
Office of Defects Investigation
NHTSA/U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590



Re: Follow-up to ODI#01621988

Dear Mr. Willard,

On behalf of the Salt Lake City residents that elected me to represent them on the Board of Education, I am filing this complaint/request with your office.

This is a follow up to a complaint I submitted to your office that was assigned ODI #01621988. It appears that one of the parents with a student on the bus also filed a complaint that was assigned ODI # 10621988.

On **June 3, 2014**, Salt Lake City School District Bus # 199 (VIN 1B8BNBXA21F098333) was taking students home from school when the heater hose inside the passenger compartment ruptured and spewed pressurized, scalding antifreeze on the students in the school bus, several of them were severely burned to the point of requiring hospitalization.

The Superintendent and Transportation Director of our school district initially declared that this was an “**isolated incident**” and no further action other than repairing bus #199 was required. I sent both of them information demonstrating that this was happening across the country and was not an isolated incident. Following a **June 24, 2014**, meeting with the Transportation Director and the parents, I sent the Superintendent and the Transportation Director an email, challenging their contention of this being an “**isolated incident**”. In that email (see attached), I included copies of the recall notice issued by your office, styled NHTSA Campaign Number:14V-313.

Through a series of email exchanges, the school district bureaucracy made the point that the bus in question was not part of the recall notice. They also cited a UHP report that this was not their fault.

“Local school boards are the bedrock of our society, yet they are invisible to the public”

Señor Florez –Deseret News

In some frustration, I filed a complaint with the Utah Department of Transportation, Motor Carriers Division (see attached) and with the Utah State Office of Education (see attached).

Due to the fact that the Superintendent was providing me with misleading and conflicting information over the past three months, I submitted a Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA) request.

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The school district responded to my request with 103 pages of documentation that I received today. The response was incomplete because I am aware of other information that they have not included. I am in the process of sending them a request for the omitted information.

I want to draw your attention to page 67 of the district's GRAMA response. This is an email exchange (see attached) between Mr. Martinez, Transportation Service Manager and Mr. Tucker, Transportation Director. You will note that Mr. Martinez states that he has identified 28 buses in the school district's fleet with the same type of heater system as Bus #199. He also states the following:

"The year make and model affected are, 1992-2005 Blue Bird All American and some TC2000 models. While researching this problem it was found that one of the factory guards has a 2" hole in it. We also found where the factory guards that mount to the sidewall of bus do not always fit tight".

Mr. Martinez goes on to explain the modifications and repairs that he has caused to be done in order to mitigate the identified defects.

As you are aware, the original safety recall (14V-313) issued by your office, referenced Blue Bird/All American buses/2008-2013. I recognize that the recall notice cited a thermostat problem that caused the hose to rupture. The same safety recall also acknowledged that the shielding over the heater hose in the passenger compartment was deficient. As cited in my complaint to the Utah State Office of Education, the National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures requires: *Heater lines on the interior of the bus shall be shielded to prevent scalding of the driver and passengers.*

Based on the incident in Salt Lake City and the description provided by Mr. Martinez, the required shielding is clearly defected. I would request that your office inspect 1992-2005, Blue Bird buses to determine if the shielding is as inadequate as we have discovered here in Salt Lake City. If this is a widespread national problem, **I would request that your office issue an immediate safety recall notice for the 1992-2005 Blue Bird School Buses.**

Shalom,


J. Michael Clára
Board Member, District 2

cc: Mr. Muller Martin, Utah State Office of Education
Lt. Willmore, Utah Highway Patrol

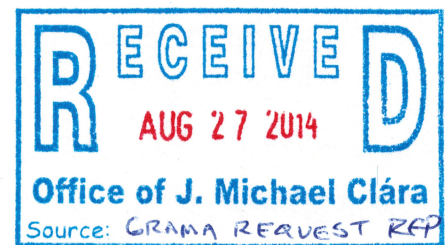


Britta Barney




From: Steve Woods
Sent: Tuesday, August 19, 2014 1:24 PM
To: Kristina Kindl
Subject: FW: Heater hose cover modification
Attachments: 006.JPG; 007.JPG; 008.JPG; 009.JPG; 013.JPG; 016.JPG; 017.JPG; 018.JPG

Grama request

From: Ken Martinez
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2014 9:46 AM
To: Steve Woods
Subject: FW: Heater hose cover modification



KEN MARTINEZ
SERVICE MANAGER
SLC SCHOOL DISTRICT

(801)974-8357  desk
(801)231-1299  cell
(801)974-8355  fax

From: Ken Martinez
Sent: Wednesday, July 2, 2014 10:39 AM
To: Shawn Tucker
Subject: Heater hose cover modification

Shawn,

I have been working very hard to come up with a solution to prevent any further problems with the interior heaters and the coolant that flows through them possibly coming in contact with passengers. I have inspected the complete fleet and found that we have 28 units with this type heater system in them. The year make and model effected are, 1992-2005 Blue Bird All American and some TC2000 models. While researching this problem it was found that one of the factory guards has a 2" hole in it. We also found where the factory guards that mount to the sidewall of bus do not always fit tight.

Picture #6 shows bus #199's heater that had the problem.

Picture #7 & #8 shows how the coolant sprayed out while under pressure. Note the spray comes through the hole as well as in between the sidewall and guard. These pictures are also shown with the seat bottom removed for clarity.

Picture #9 shows the hose that was spraying coolant with the guards removed.

Picture #13 shows bus #196's heater. (Same heater system as #199) Note the 2" hole and the slight gap in between lower guard to up right guard and lower guard to sidewall.


Picture #16 shows the 2" hard plastic plug installed. It took just over 40 pounds of pressure to blow this plug out when installed. Coolant pressure in the bus should never exceed 18 pounds.


Picture #17 shows where we installed silicone to fill the gap from the lower and upright guards to prevent coolant spray.


Picture #18 shows the silicone applied where the lower guard and sidewall come into contact.

We are in the process of completing this modification to all the effected buses in our fleet. I feel that this should prevent any direct contact of the bus coolant with the passengers in the case of a internal coolant leak.

KEN MARTINEZ
SERVICE MANAGER
SLC SCHOOL DISTRICT

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