



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

August 6, 2002

The Honorable Richard H. Baker  
Member, U.S. House of  
Representatives  
5555 Hilton Avenue, Suite 100  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

*Richard H. Baker*  
Dear Congressman Baker:

Thank you for your letter of June 3 on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Jim Milazzo, who has developed a product designed to minimize the risk of trailers being detached from automobiles while towing.

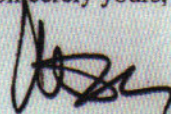
The real world crash data collected by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) indicate that accidents involving vehicles towing trailers increased 36 percent from 1992 to 2000. It is possible that the use of trailers is on the rise, and this may partly explain the increase in the number of accidents involving vehicles towing trailers. Further, sport utility vehicles, pickups, and minivans, which often are used to tow trailers, account for about half of all new vehicle sales in the U.S. market. NHTSA has recently developed a safety brochure for people who may not be very familiar with towing trailers, a copy of which is enclosed. This brochure addresses such issues as selecting the appropriate vehicle and proper procedures for hitching trailers to vehicles.

The U.S. Department of Transportation often receives letters from people requesting that NHTSA evaluate, endorse, approve, require, or fund development of their inventions. NHTSA has no authority to approve, disapprove, or endorse proprietary devices or commercial products. The agency is authorized to issue safety standards applicable to new motor vehicles and certain items of motor vehicle equipment. NHTSA uses a "self-certification" system under which manufacturers certify that their products meet all applicable safety standards. The agency periodically tests vehicles and equipment for compliance with the applicable standards and also investigates other alleged safety-related defects. However, the design of the equipment to meet those standards rests with the manufacturer of the equipment.



I trust this information is useful for your constituent. If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norman Y. Mineta', written over a horizontal line.

Norman Y. Mineta

2 Enclosures  
Constituent's Correspondence  
Brochure

cc: Washington Office