

From: [Robert Hopchin](#)
To: [FamiliesCommunities Committee](#); [Edmonton Glenora](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Input on Auto Repair Protection - Bill 203
Date: Monday, October 17, 2016 9:48:51 AM
Attachments: [Shenanigans - Buyer Beware Reduced.docx](#)

To Whom It May Concern

Current manufacturer's polices can cost Albertans up to 500% more in maintenance costs than many Americans have to pay.

The attached document outlines a recent car repair issue that was not resolved at the dealership, corporate, media, or Better Business Bureau levels.

In my opinion my 2013 Owners Manual significantly misrepresented schedule maintenance requirements.

Neither the manufacturer nor the dealer bothered to correct the problem with adequate notification when they clearly had the capacity to do so.

Regulation requiring dealers to disclose scheduled maintenance discrepancies would help. Ideally this should be done at the time and place of sale. Failing this regulations requiring corporations to update manuals with electronic and mail-out notifications of errata and/or discrepancies in the form of addenda would be helpful.

Regulations requiring vehicles that are sold in Alberta to enable fluid sampling or mandating the installation of sensors to report on fluid purity on a real time basis could help save Albertans a lot of money and the environment a lot of undue stress.

Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter.

Bob Hopchin

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Shenanigans - Buyer Beware!

Some automobile manufacturers may be understating the performance of environmentally dangerous automotive fluids by as much as 500% thereby affecting millions of vehicles, customers, and the environment. Yet, no one is calling them to task.

Recently our 2013 Ford Edge was taken into a Ford dealership for a regular oil change.

After the oil change had been completed the service advisor recommended a coolant flush and an automatic transmission flush. He indicated that this should be done every 2 years or 50,000kms. Since the vehicle had 63,500 kms and was 3 years old it was overdue. He apologized that this hadn't been mentioned by other service advisors when the car had previously been in at the same dealership for oil changes.

Our owners manual was in the vehicle which was still inside the shop. As a result we could not verify that what the service advisor was saying agreed with the manufacturer's recommendation in the owner's manual. We had to accept, in good faith, that the dealership was properly representing Ford.

After paying \$530 for the "flushing services" our vehicle was returned. When we read the owners manual we were shocked at the discrepancy between what the dealership's recommendation and what Ford recommends in the Edge's manual. The manual recommends a coolant flush at 160,000 kms, our vehicle had only reached 40% of that level. The same manual recommends an automatic transmission flush at 240,000 kms, our vehicle had only reached 26% of that level.

Automatic Transmission Fluid is chemically more complex than motor oil. It must be refined in quantity prior to its initial installation. Subsequent recycling requires re-refining in significant quantities, quantities measured not in parts per million but in many litres of fluid for each vehicle. This escalates quickly into barrels and millions of barrels over the lifetime of tens of millions of vehicles. The impact that increasing the recycle frequency has on the environment can be played out all across North America.

Relating our displeasure at what we considered to be a premature replacement of automotive fluids to a shop foreman we were told that "due to the severe climate" in Edmonton that Ford recommended the transmission fluid be changed every 48,000 kms. As verification the dealership sent us a copy of a Ford Maintenance Bulletin.

I wrote to the corporate officers of Ford and the dealership suggesting that if they could send the dealer a significant maintenance update then surely they could send vehicle purchasers updates as well, especially when dealerships could find time to send loyal customers invitations to upcoming sales events and promotional materials on a regular basis.

Interestingly, the **owner's manual in our vehicle never mentioned weather or climate as a factor** requiring the application of additional maintenance as outlined under "Special Operating Conditions".

In subsequent discussions with a staff member in Ford's Executive Offices I was told that although operating a vehicle in a cold climate wasn't listed in the owners manual as a condition requiring an accelerated maintenance schedule the manual did identify dusty and sandy conditions as requiring additional maintenance. **I was also told that Ford considered "snow" as being equivalent to dusty and sandy conditions** and as such snow fit under "Special Operating Conditions" making snowy areas eligible for additional maintenance.

I was left to ponder how these could be considered to be "special" or extraordinary when most areas of the country and indeed our continent seem to experience dust, sand, and/or snow? Moreover, since my vehicle spent the first year of its life in Vancouver I wondered if it shouldn't be eligible for a 33% reduction in the application of the severe climate designation?

Unfortunately, Ford sales people do not typically advertise to Joe Public, at least in Edmonton where I live, that their vehicles require automatic transmission fluid changes at 48,000 kms intervals because they live in a "cold climate".

Support for the belief that Ford withholds pertinent information is supported by those Ford owners' manuals which obfuscate the 48,000 kms need by stating that ATF needs to be changed at 240,000 kms. When those same manuals also elect to omit identifying cold weather as a contributing factor to higher maintenance schedules Ford hides pertinent information. When those same manuals also elect to omit identifying snow as being equivalent to dust and sand and thus contributing to higher maintenance schedules Ford hides pertinent information.

When I wrote to the executive officers of Ford Motor Company with my concerns it took over two months to get a reply. In the end a corporate reply stated "Ford of Canada feels that the dealership has advised accurate information concerning the interval of the transmission fluid maintenance". The CEO of the dealership never responded but a Director at the dealership assured me that neither Ford nor the dealership was trying to deceive me.

Unfortunately, when information on internal bulletins differs significantly from information in owners manuals the seeds of mistrust are sown.

Unfortunately, the actions of sales people and manual writers impedes a consumers ability to accurately determine the cost of ownership and thus the reliability of vehicles.

Manufacturers could do better. At the time of manufacture sensors could be installed in coolant systems and transmissions to monitor fluid conditions on a real time basis. Alternately, allowing access so samples of fluids could be removed in a repair shop

setting for analysis to determine their level of purity and efficacy. Either scenario would be better than current maintenance procedures.

Ironically, fighting global warming promises to keep Ford in the high maintenance fluid flushing business for years because snowy climates apparently require more fluids. Unfortunately, this can also produce more unhappy customers.

On the other hand, fighting global warming by producing electric cars will end Ford's high maintenance fluid flushing business because electric vehicles don't require automatic transmissions. Ford is in a lose lose position.

Looks like it is time to sell my Ford stock.

Length 986 words

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited. If you received this email and are not the intended recipient, please inform the sender by email reply and destroy all copies of the original message.