

Comment from Dayle Garfield

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Subject: Opposition to Exemption Petition for Freightliner Cascadia Vehicles

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the exemption petition filed by Daimler Trucks North America, LLC (DTNA) regarding certain model year (MY) 2020-2021 Freightliner Cascadia heavy motor vehicles. Specifically, I am deeply concerned about the potential inclusion of other reflective devices, such as identification lights, in this exemption.

As a former passenger aboard one of these vehicles, I experienced firsthand the severe consequences of their noncompliance with safety standards. On September 15th, 2022, I was involved in an accident while riding in a Cascadia Freightliner, unaware of a previous recall related to defective lighting components. This lack of awareness led to a slip and fall incident caused by water leaking from the lights at the top of the vehicle, resulting in life-altering injuries. The pain and trauma I have endured as a result of this incident are beyond words. I suffered complete numbing of the left side of my torso, a broken foot, and multiple bulging and herniated disks, one of which is impinging on my spinal cord. This experience has drastically changed my life, leaving me unable to perform basic tasks and facing the possibility of spinal collapse. My personal experience underscores the critical importance of maintaining stringent safety standards for all components of motor vehicles, including reflective devices. Any exemption that allows for noncompliance with these standards poses a significant risk to the safety of drivers, passengers, and the general public.

Furthermore, exempting other reflective devices from compliance requirements fails to account for the complexities of driving large commercial vehicles. Drivers rely on properly functioning equipment to navigate safely on the roads, and any deviation from safety standards can have dire consequences.

I urge you to oppose DTNA's exemption petition or, at the very least, amend it to exclude other reflective lights. The safety of individuals on the road should never be compromised, and it is essential to hold manufacturers accountable for ensuring compliance with safety regulations.