



Transportation Chief Keeps Pressure on Toyota

Written On February 4, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

The federal government is really pushing Toyota to correct the sticking throttle problems that have plagued the car company for weeks, if not much longer. Here are the opening paragraphs of an article in the [New York Times](#):

The Transportation Department scrambled on Wednesday to keep up the pressure on Toyota, with the agency's head at one point telling owners of recalled vehicles to stop driving them.

But the department head, Ray LaHood, later tried to clarify what he called "obviously a misstatement," saying that he meant only to urge Toyota owners concerned about their cars to take them in to dealerships.

In remarks before a House appropriations hearing, Mr. LaHood said his advice to owners of recalled Toyotas was to "stop driving it, take it to a Toyota dealer because they believe they have a fix for it."

Afterward, at a news conference, Mr. LaHood, backing away from his off-the-cuff remarks, said: "What I said in there was obviously a misstatement." And in a statement issued by the agency, Mr. LaHood said: "I want to encourage owners of any recalled Toyota models to contact their local dealer and get their vehicles fixed as soon as possible."

His comments were the latest in an aggressive campaign by his department over the Toyota situation. Last week, Mr. LaHood took credit for the company's decision to stop building and selling eight models involved in a recall over accelerator pedals that could potentially stick, saying Toyota did not take the step until urged to do so by the department.

Kraft & Associates
2777 Stemmons Freeway
Suite 1300
Dallas, Texas 75207
Toll Free: (800) 989-9999
FAX: (214) 637-2118
E-mail: info@kraftlaw.com

Some safety advocates said, however, that Mr. LaHood might be trying to protect federal safety regulators from potential liability issues over their role in investigating defects.

Earlier he told reporters that he planned to call the president of Toyota, Akio Toyoda, about the recalls involving problems with accelerator pedals that could stick.

“I’m going to take the initiative to have a conversation with Mr. Toyoda very soon, to talk to him about how serious this is, and to make sure that he understands,” Mr. LaHood said. “I think he understands, but I’ve never talked to him. I just feel like I need to have a conversation with him.”