

Statement from U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on Toyota's Agreement to Pay Maximum Civil Penalty

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today made the following statement after Toyota Motor Corporation agreed to pay a \$16.375 million fine - the largest fine permitted by law - for failing to notify the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a dangerous pedal defect for almost four months:

"By failing to report known safety problems as it is required to do under the law, Toyota put consumers at risk," said Secretary LaHood. "I am pleased that Toyota has accepted responsibility for violating its legal obligations to report any defects promptly. We are continuing to investigate whether the company has lived up to all its disclosure obligations."

The \$16.375 million fine for Toyota is the largest civil penalty ever assessed against an auto manufacturer by NHTSA. This penalty relates specifically to both the "sticky pedal" and "slow to return pedal" defects, which resulted in Toyota's recall of approximately 2.3 million vehicles in the U.S. in late January.

On February 16, NHTSA launched an investigation into the timeliness and scope of the three recent Toyota recalls and required the automaker to turn over documents and explanations related to its adherence to U.S. auto safety laws. NHTSA officials are continuing to review Toyota's statements and more than 120,000 pages of Toyota documents to determine whether the company has complied with all its legal obligations.

NHTSA has the most active defect investigation program in the world, opening or closing an investigation almost every week. Over the last three years, NHTSA's defect and compliance investigations have resulted in 524 recalls involving 23.5 million vehicles.