

and deaths resulting from traffic accidents.

In recent years, the agency has received a number of economic hardship petitions concerning requirements for air bags. Most of the petitions have been limited to requirements for advanced air bags, which did not become effective for small volume manufacturers until September 1, 2006. A very small number of petitioners have requested that vehicles be permitted to be manufactured and sold without air bags.

We are concerned about the potential safety implication of any temporary exemptions that may be granted by this agency. However, in considering whether a requested economic hardship exemption is in the public interest and consistent with the Safety Act, we believe it is important to distinguish between petitions requesting exemptions from requirements for advanced air bags and ones requesting exemptions to permit vehicles to be manufactured and sold without air bags.

There are significant differences between these two types of petitions. One difference relates to the length of the time that the relevant requirements have been in effect, and related technical difficulties in bringing vehicles into compliance with the requirements. The other difference relates to safety benefits.

All passenger cars manufactured on or after September 1, 1997 have been required to provide air bags at the driver and right front passenger positions. Thus, the requirements for "basic" air bags are longstanding, and a number of small volume manufacturers have found ways to meet the requirements.

By contrast, the requirements for advanced air bags did not become effective for small volume manufacturers until September 1, 2006. Because the new advanced air bag requirements were challenging, major air bag suppliers concentrated their efforts on working with large volume manufacturers, and thus, until recently, small volume manufacturers had limited access to advanced air bag technology.

Frontal air bags for drivers and right front passengers have great net benefits. NHTSA estimates that they saved 19,659 lives from 1987 through the end of 2005.<sup>4</sup> Air bags reduce overall fatality risk in purely frontal crashes by 29 percent. They reduce overall fatality risk by 12 percent for drivers of passenger

cars, and by 14 percent for right front passengers of passenger cars.<sup>5</sup>

Given the large benefits of frontal air bags, the number of years that the requirements have been in effect and the fact that a number of small volume manufacturers have been able to meet the requirements for "basic" air bags, we have determined that it is generally not in the public interest or consistent with the Safety Act to grant new economic hardship exemptions to permit light vehicles to be sold without air bags. We note that while the agency has granted a small number of such exemptions in the past, we believe it is more difficult with the passage of time, to justify granting such petitions, since air bag technology has been widely available and incorporated into vehicle designs for over twenty years.

As for the SS II Shelby Series II, we note that, as indicated earlier, SS II began operations in January 2006. It acquired the tooling for the Shelby Series 1 vehicle under a licensing agreement from Shelby American Corporation, pursuant to which SS II has the right to produce a convertible sports car based upon the Shelby Series 1 design. The Shelby Series II would utilize the same chassis as the Shelby Series 1, but use modified exterior, interior, and powertrain components. The SS II Shelby Series II is in essence a modified version of an older vehicle that was designed without air bags. Given the safety benefits of frontal air bags, we have determined that it would not be in the public interest or consistent with the Safety Act to grant an economic hardship exemption to permit the manufacture and sale of this vehicle without air bags.

Since we have determined that the requested exemption is not in the public interest or consistent with the Safety Act, it is not necessary address the issues of economic hardship or whether or not the manufacturer has tried to comply with the standard in good faith.

Accordingly, SS II's petition for a temporary exemption is denied.

Issued on: May 24, 2007.

**Nicole R. Nason,**

*Administrator.*

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<sup>5</sup> Kahane, C.J., *Lives Saved by the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and Other Vehicle Safety Technologies, 1960-2002*, NHTSA Technical Report No. DOT HS 809 833, Washington, 2004, pp. 108-115.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-2007-28262]

#### Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 2005 Honda CR-V Multipurpose Passenger Vehicles Are Eligible for Importation

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 2005 Honda CR-V multipurpose passenger vehicles are eligible for importation.

**SUMMARY:** This document announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that 2005 Honda CR-V multipurpose passenger vehicles that were not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS) are eligible for importation into the United States because (1) they are substantially similar to vehicles that were originally manufactured for sale in the United States and that were certified by their manufacturer as complying with the safety standards, and (2) they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

**DATES:** The closing date for comments on the petition is July 2, 2007.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should refer to the docket number and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, DC 20590. [Docket hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.] Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Coleman Sachs, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202-366-3151).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable FMVSS shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a

<sup>4</sup> Traffic Safety Facts—2005 Data—Occupant Protection, NHTSA Report No. DOT HS 810 691, Washington, 2006.

motor vehicle originally manufactured for sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. 30115, and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable FMVSS.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the **Federal Register** of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the **Federal Register**.

Wallace Environmental Testing Laboratories, Inc. (WETL) of Houston, TX (Registered Importer 90-005) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether nonconforming 2005 Honda CR-V multipurpose passenger vehicles are eligible for importation into the United States. The vehicles which WETL believes are substantially similar are 2005 Honda CR-V multipurpose passenger vehicles that were manufactured for sale in the United States and certified by their manufacturer as conforming to all applicable FMVSS.

The petitioner claims that it carefully compared non-U.S. certified 2005 Honda CR-V multipurpose passenger vehicles to their U.S.-certified counterparts, and found the vehicles to be substantially similar with respect to compliance with most FMVSS.

WETL submitted information with its petition intended to demonstrate that non-U.S. certified 2005 Honda CR-V multipurpose passenger vehicles, as originally manufactured, conform to many FMVSS in the same manner as their U.S. certified counterparts, or are capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that non-U.S. certified 2005 Honda CR-V multipurpose passenger vehicles are identical to their U.S.-certified counterparts with respect to compliance with Standard Nos. 102 *Transmission Shift Lever Sequence, Starter Interlock, and Transmission Braking Effect*, 103 *Windshield Defrosting and Defogging Systems*, 104 *Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems*, 106 *Brake Hoses*, 113 *Hood Latch System*, 114 *Theft Protection*, 116 *Motor Vehicle Brake Fluids*, 118 *Power-Operated Window, Partition, and Roof Panel Systems*, 119

*New Pneumatic Tires for Vehicles Other than Passenger Cars*, 124 *Accelerator Control Systems*, 135 *Passenger Car Brake Systems*, 202 *Head Restraints*, 204 *Steering Control Rearward Displacement*, 205 *Glazing Materials*, 206 *Door Locks and Door Retention Components*, 207 *Seating Systems*, 210 *Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages*, 212 *Windshield Mounting*, 214 *Side Impact Protection*, 216 *Roof Crush Resistance*, 219 *Windshield Zone Intrusion*, 301 *Fuel System Integrity*, and 302 *Flammability of Interior Materials*.

The petitioner also contends that the vehicles are capable of being readily altered to meet the following standards, in the manner indicated:

Standard No. 101 *Controls and Displays*: Installation of a U.S.-model instrument cluster, Engine Control Unit and associated U.S.-model software.

Standard No. 108 *Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment*: Inspection of all vehicles and installation, on vehicles that are not already so equipped, of U.S.-model front and rear side-mounted marker lamps.

Standard No. 111 *Rearview Mirrors*: Installation of a U.S.-model passenger side rearview mirror, or inscription of the required warning statement on the face of that mirror.

Standard No. 120 *Tire Selection and Rims for Motor Vehicles Other than Passenger Cars*: Installation of a tire information placard.

Standard No. 201 *Occupant Protection in Interior Impact*: Inspection of all vehicles and installation, on vehicles that are not already so equipped, of U.S.-model components to meet the requirements of this standard.

Standard No. 208 *Occupant Crash Protection*: (a) Inspection of all vehicles and replacement of any non U.S.-model seat belts, knee bolsters, air bag control units, and air bags with U.S.-model components on vehicles that are not already so equipped; and (b) installation of U.S. version software to ensure that the seat belt warning system meets the requirements of this standard.

Standard No. 209 *Seat Belt Assemblies*: Inspection of all vehicles and installation, on vehicles that are not already so equipped, of U.S.-model components to meet the requirements of this standard.

Standard No. 225 *Child Restraint Anchorage Systems*: Inspection of all vehicles and installation, on vehicles that are not already so equipped, of U.S.-model components to meet the requirements of this standard.

The petitioner additionally states that a vehicle identification plate must be affixed to the vehicles near the left

windshield post to meet the requirements of 49 CFR part 565.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the petition described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, DC 20590. [Docket hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.]. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated above will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Notice of final action on the petition will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A) and (b)(1); 49 CFR 593.8; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: May 25, 2007.

**Claude H. Harris,**

*Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-2007-28264]

#### Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 2003 Kawasaki VN1500-P1/P2 Series Motorcycles Are Eligible for Importation

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 2003 Kawasaki VN1500-P1/P2 series motorcycles are eligible for importation.

**SUMMARY:** This document announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that 2003 Kawasaki VN1500-P1/P2 series motorcycles that were not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS) are eligible for importation into the United States because (1) they are substantially similar to vehicles that were originally manufactured for sale in the United States and that were certified by their manufacturer as complying with the safety standards, and (2) they are