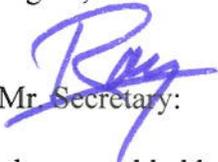


United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4502

August 4, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood
The Secretary of U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr.  Secretary:

I have been troubled by recent reports that the Department of Transportation is refusing to publicly release useful government information about the performance of the so-called "cash for clunkers" car rebate program. The Department's reluctance to share this important information with the American people is all the more troubling because of the administration's recent request that the Congress approve an additional \$2 billion to fund this program.

According to press reports, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has collected data on at least 157,000 car rebate transactions under the program – including information about sales agreements and vehicle fuel economy. The Obama administration recently cited this data to support claims that the cash for clunkers program will generate a 61 percent increase in vehicle fuel economy and save American consumers more than \$700 per year in reduced gas consumption. Unfortunately, neither the Congress nor the American people have had access to this pertinent data.

The public release of information about this car rebate program is necessary to ensure that both the Congress and the American people can make well-informed judgments about the merits of continuing this program in these economically challenging times. Given this, I request that you instruct the NHTSA to promptly release the data that has been collected in the "cash for clunkers" database to date, in a manner consistent with federal privacy laws, the Freedom of Information Act and other laws intended to protect consumer privacy and confidentiality.

In light of the great public interest in this issue -- and the time sensitivity of this matter -- I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,


PATRICK LEAHY
Chairman