

June 6, 2016

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: SB 1015 Counterfeit Airbags – SUPPORT

Dear Governor Haley:

On behalf of the [Association of Global Automakers, Inc.](#) (“Global Automakers”) and our membership, I write to express our **support for SB 1015**, which seeks to create criminal penalties for individuals who knowingly participate in the manufacture, sale or installation of counterfeit or non-functional airbags. Over the past three years Global Automakers has been part of a coalition that has successfully advocated for similar legislation to be enacted in Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Maryland, Washington State and Texas with tremendous bipartisan support. We applaud the legislature of passing this legislation and urge you to sign it into law.

Global Automakers represents international motor vehicle manufacturers, original equipment suppliers, and other automotive-related trade associations. In the state of South Carolina, our members manufactured 51% of all passenger vehicles and 84% of green vehicles sold in the state. We work with industry leaders, legislators, regulators, and other stakeholders in the United States to create public policies that improve motor vehicle safety, encourage technological innovation and protect our planet. Our goal is to foster an open and competitive automotive marketplace that encourages investment, job growth, and development of vehicles that can enhance Americans’ quality of life.

Safety is of paramount concern to automobile manufacturers, and the proliferation of counterfeit and nonfunctional airbags is a serious public safety issue. Auto manufacturers design vehicles to meet, or exceed strict government safety standards, and the vehicle’s structural design and restraint systems play a pivotal role in achieving this. In a collision, the vehicle’s structure and restraint systems, including the airbag and seat belts, perform in unison to effectively manage the crash forces to which the occupant is exposed. Each of these systems is calibrated to a specific make, model, and model year vehicle, and minor changes to one aspect of the system can change the performance of other systems, and increase the potential for injury in a crash. Those facilitating the installation of a counterfeit or substandard airbag deliberately compromise the protection afforded to South Carolina drivers and passengers in the event of a crash, exposing them to a higher risk of injury.



In October 2012, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a consumer advisory¹ alerting vehicle owners and repair professionals to the dangers of counterfeit airbags that have been installed in vehicles. Global Automakers' members have worked closely with NHTSA to provide guidance for vehicle owners concerned that such airbags may have been installed in their vehicles. We believe it is wrong to allow an individual to intentionally make, distribute, sell, or install non-functional or counterfeit airbags without consequences. This legislation is another important step to ensuring that all vehicles in the state are equipped with safe equipment and do not jeopardize the safety of passengers.

We commend the sponsors of this legislation and ask that you sign it into law. If you have any questions, please call me at 202-650-5565 or e-mail me at dgarriepy@globalautomakers.org. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Garriepy".

David J. Garriepy
Manager, State Government Affairs

¹ NHTSA Safety Advisory Alerting Consumers to Dangers of Counterfeit Air Bags:
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/About+NHTSA/Press+Releases/2012/Safety+Advisory:+NHTSA+Alerting+Consumers+to+Dangers+of+Counterfeit+Air+Bags>