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Motor Vehicle Parts Suppliers Comment on NHTSA'S Proposed Import Safety Guidelines

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Comments collected from a task force of North American motor vehicle parts suppliers regarding the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) proposed importer best practices were submitted today by the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA); the Automotive Aftermarket Suppliers Association (AASA), its aftermarket segment association; the Heavy Duty Manufacturers Association (HDMA), MEMA's heavy duty market segment association; and two independent groups managed by MEMA: the Transportation Safety Equipment Institute (TSEI) and the Motor Vehicle Lighting Council (MVLIC).

The comments were in response to NHTSA's request for comments on guidance and recommended best importer practices to enhance the safety of imported motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment.

The supplier task force held weekly meetings for a month to review the NHTSA draft document, discuss the intent and prepare extensive comments. Chief among the MEMA task force's recommendations were:

NHTSA's product marking recommendation go beyond just the "country of origin" mark by adding the following: manufacturer name or trademark; date or date range of manufacture; and, any marking requirements from an industry standard or recommended practice.

The NHTSA guidance include more details regarding documentation – particularly to incorporate the principles behind "design to conform" methodology and standardized quality planning and process systems.

"We appreciate the fact that NHTSA is seeking input on its proposed guidance and recommended best practices," said Bob McKenna, MEMA president and CEO. "Our members have a long history of working with the agency to help improve product safety. We hope that our joint efforts will continue that work and reduce the number of non-compliant or unsafe products."

"We thank the member volunteers for their efforts preparing these comments. Our response to NHTSA highlights the challenges facing the automotive aftermarket, the industry segment which primarily deals with ensuring compliance and safety of imported automotive parts," said Steve Handschuh, AASA's

president and chief operating officer. “We believe NHTSA is sending the right message to the aftermarket – to practice due diligence, be responsible and be compliant.”

“Our HDMA members and councils have worked diligently with NHTSA to reduce the number of non-compliant imported truck parts and increase the safety of trucks on US highways. “ said Tim Kraus, HDMA president and COO. “Their valuable input and the continued collaboration with NHTSA again reinforces the commitment of our organizations to improve product safety.”

According to recent studies, motor vehicle suppliers employ 783,100 in the United States and contribute to 4.5 million domestic jobs. Suppliers provide 70 percent of the content of U.S.-built cars and trucks. Suppliers manufacture the parts and technology used in the production of more than 11 million new cars and trucks produced each year, and the aftermarket products necessary to repair and maintain more than 247 million vehicles on the road today. For more information on the motor vehicle parts supplier industry, please visit www.mema.org or www.automotivesupplier.org.

About AASA

AASA (www.aftermarketsuppliers.org) exclusively serves suppliers of aftermarket components, tools and equipment, and related products. It is a recognized industry change agent – promoting a collaborative industry environment, providing a forum to address issues and serving as a valued resource for members. AASA is a market segment association of the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA). “AASA, Leadership in the Global Automotive Aftermarket”

About HDMA

The Heavy Duty Manufacturers Association (HDMA) has served the strategic needs of its 170+ member companies and the commercial vehicle industry since 1983. A market segment association of the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA), HDMA’s mission is to be the industry’s primary advocate for the members of the commercial vehicle supplier community. With a continuous focus on its members, HDMA strives to advance the image and interests of the industry and its member companies.

About MEMA

MEMA supports its members through its three market segment associations, Automotive Aftermarket Suppliers Association (AASA), Heavy Duty Manufacturers Association (HDMA), and Original Equipment Suppliers Association (OESA). For more information on the motor vehicle parts supplier industry, visit www.mema.org or www.automotivesupplier.org.