



COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRATS
ENERGY & COMMERCE
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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**Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., as prepared for delivery
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Hearing on “Volkswagen Emissions Cheating Allegations: Initial Questions”**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing. We are here today because Volkswagen lied. They lied to regulators. They lied to their customers. And they lied to the American public.

We all have many important questions that deserve answers. What did Volkswagen do to its cars? Why did they do it? And who knew this was happening, both in Germany and here in the U.S.?

This whole scheme makes me question how much we should trust Volkswagen. And to be honest, this Committee’s investigations over the last five years make me question how much we should trust the auto industry.

Let me remind the Committee of the difficult history the American driver has had with the auto industry in recent years.

In 2010, this Committee investigated Toyota’s recall of nine million vehicles worldwide for unexplained cases of sudden unintended acceleration. Dozens of people died in accidents linked to runaway Toyota vehicles. Our Committee held multiple hearings and in the end, it was determined that Toyota knew about certain problems with their vehicles that if fixed early would likely have saved lives.

In early 2014, we launched an investigation of General Motors’ ignition switches that killed many people. Our Committee’s investigation found that individuals within GM knew about the deadly ignition defect for nearly a decade before the company initiated a recall.

Later in 2014, we learned of the exploding Takata airbags installed in vehicles made by at least 11 auto manufacturers. The recalls for airbag problems began as early as 2008, yet Takata and NHTSA continue to investigate whether additional recalls are still necessary. Takata still has not determined the root cause of the defect, which has killed a number of people worldwide and injured hundreds more.

And now, we have Volkswagen. A company that told regulators that their vehicles met emission standards, but had actually installed defeat devices to bypass emission controls.

Over the past five years, the world's three largest automakers have come before this Committee to admit that they have cheated the system and lied to American consumers. There seems to be a pervasive culture of deception in this industry and it is has to stop now.

Mr. Chairman, the American people need to know that they are safe on our roads. And they need to know that, when they decide to buy a car, they are actually getting what they paid for. The auto industry has deliberately chosen to perpetuate lies and mislead consumers. But the American public are not crash test dummies and cannot be treated as such.

Mr. Horn, I understand that you won't have all the answers here today. But please don't hide behind an internal investigations excuse. It is time for Volkswagen to be forthcoming with its customers, regulators, and Congress about what you did to these cars and why. We deserve an explanation.

I yield my remaining time to Rep. Schakowsky.

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