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News Release

The Cooper Firm, Beasley Allen react to GM evaluation of ignition switch recall

June 5, 2014

GM CEO Mary Barra blamed ignition switch failure and recall delay linked to serious injuries and deaths on “pattern of incompetence and neglect at the company”

MONTGOMERY, ALA. (June 5, 2014) – General Motors (GM) CEO Mary Barra shared the findings of an internal investigation into the company’s handling of an ignition switch defect that it admits is linked to at least 13 deaths and 31 crashes. She called the report “extremely thorough, brutally tough and deeply troubling.” She said the report found no conspiracy by the corporation to cover up facts, but blamed the problem on a “pattern of incompetence and neglect.” She said, “The ignition switch issue was touched by numerous parties at GM – investigators, engineers, and lawyers – but no one raised the issues to the highest levels of the company. Overall, the report concludes that from start to finish, the Cobalt saga was riddled with failure, which led to tragic results for many.”

Jere Beasley, the founding shareholder at Beasley Allen, stated, “I find it virtually impossible to believe that top officials at GM didn’t know about the defect and were unaware of the failure to report the problem to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). If GM operated in the manner described over a full decade, then there are many more safety problems out there today. Hopefully the safety culture at GM will change now and safety will become a top priority at the top levels of the company.

Lance Cooper, founder of The Cooper Firm, added, “Although Mary Barra’s remarks provide additional information about the investigation, there is still much work to be done. Ms. Barra denies that there is any evidence that GM employees made a trade-off between safety and cost. Documents produced in the Melton case, as well as the testimony of the GM employees, clearly show that GM chose not to fix the safety defects in these vehicles for cost reasons. This is why it is critical that the civil cases move forward so that the American public may learn the whole truth, not just the truth GM chooses to disclose.”

As a result of the report, Barra said 15 individuals were fired and disciplinary action was taken against five other people. She said these actions were taken against people who were determined to have acted inappropriately, committed misconduct or were incompetent. Barra said, “Experienced engineers with the

responsibility for safety did not understand that the airbags would not deploy if the ignition switch changed into the off position.” She said the investigation included more than 350 interviews with 230 individuals and review of more than 41 million documents and expects the full report to be available on the NHTSA website.

Lance Cooper is the lawyer who first discovered GM’s ignition switch defect and uncovered the automaker’s cover-up, which finally led to massive recalls. The two firms have a history of being highly successful in product liability litigation. Beasley Allen was heavily involved in the Toyota sudden acceleration litigation and tried the lawsuit in Oklahoma that caused the Japanese automaker to change its litigation strategy and start settling cases. The two firms will represent victims in cases involving personal injury or death caused by the ignition switch defect.

Beasley Allen and The Cooper Firm have filed lawsuits related to the ignition switch defect that allows the key to unintentionally slip from the “run” to “off” or “accessory” position while the vehicle is being operated. The ignition defect causes the sudden loss of engine power, braking and steering, creating a hazardous emergency situation. The air bag system is also disabled and rendered useless.

GM recalled about 780,000 **2005-07 Chevrolet Cobalt** and **Pontiac G5** vehicles on Feb. 13. Twelve days later, it expanded the recall to include an additional 590,000 model-year **2003-07 Saturn Ion, Chevy HHR, Pontiac Solstice**, and **Saturn Sky** vehicles. The total number of recalled vehicles now numbers about 2.6 million related to the defect. Court documents and other evidence reveal that GM knew about the ignition switch problem as early as 2001. However, GM rejected several design changes and solutions that were recommended by its own engineers on numerous occasions because of the cost and the time it would take to make the changes.

About The Cooper Firm

Lance Cooper founded The Cooper Firm in 2006. With experience in substantial personal injury and wrongful death cases, he has represented plaintiffs in numerous civil jury trials and has successfully prosecuted hundreds of cases and gained multi-million dollar verdicts and settlements on behalf of his clients. For more information, visit www.thecooperfirm.com.

About Beasley Allen Law Firm

Headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama, Beasley Allen is comprised of more than 70 attorneys and 200 support staff. Beasley Allen is a national leader in civil litigation, with verdicts and settlements in excess of \$22 billion. For more information about our firm, please visit our website at www.beasleyallen.com.

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