



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504
<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

August 24, 2009

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to thank you for extending the deadline for dealer submissions under "Cash for Clunkers" from 8 p.m. tonight to 12 p.m. tomorrow, due to ongoing computer problems. I request that you announce immediately that the Department of Transportation will accept properly submitted electronic documentation from dealers for the next week, as long as the transaction was completed by the 8 p.m. deadline today.

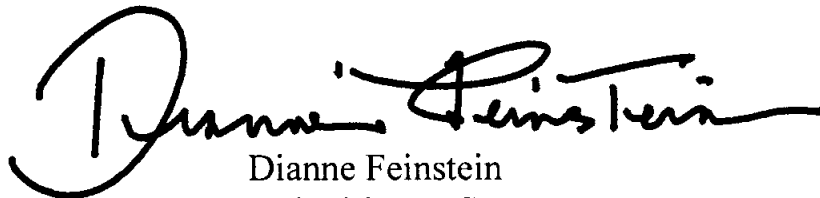
The "Cash for Clunkers" program succeeded in accomplishing its goals of increasing vehicle sales and increasing the fuel economy of our fleet. However, the tremendous consumer interest in the program has frequently overwhelmed the Department of Transportation's capacity to process claims, respond to inquiries, inform consumers, or supply data to Congress.

Of particular concern has been the department website's limited capacity to process electronic dealer submissions. I am told that the Department of Transportation website has crashed or was shut down at least three times since August 20, when the department announced that the Cash for Clunkers program would end on August 24 at 8 p.m. Dealers tell my staff that the website has not been operational for most of today. Both dealers and consumers throughout California are at risk of substantial financial loss if they are unable to submit valid "clunkers" transactions due to these computer problems.

I request that you announce immediately that your department will accept properly submitted electronic documentation from dealers for the next full week, as long as the transaction was completed by the August 24 deadline. I know of no legal reason why the deadline for dealers cannot be extended by a full week to allow for an orderly wind down of this program. Congress authorized the program through October, and the program will run out of funds regardless of whether the Department of Transportation provides an additional week for filing paperwork.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/mbn