



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
TERRI LYNN LAND, SECRETARY OF STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
LANSING

February 25, 2004

Mr. Nicholas Ekladyous  
6417 Webster Rd.  
Imlay City, MI 48444

Dear Nicholas:

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of your *Project COG* on the safety of 15-passenger vans. You have certainly put much effort into this undertaking.

I'm sure you realize from your thousands of pages of research, that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration continually faces difficult challenges. As a part of the Federal Highway Administration, NHTSA partners with the many other federal agencies, and works with vehicle manufacturers, the insurance industry, academia, and other interest groups to address what can be very complex vehicle and traffic safety issues. These challenges include ensuring the movement of people and goods from one place to another; while at the same time, ensuring the safety and security of the traveling public, promoting the efficiency of the transportation system, and protecting of the environment.

As to the serious issue of 15-passenger vans that you so capably demonstrate, NHTSA succeeded in having Congress pass a law prohibiting the sale of 15-passenger vans for the school-related transportation of students in high school or younger. Michigan lawmakers followed with a similar state ban that took effect on October 1, 1993.

NHTSA has also repeatedly issued cautionary warnings about these vehicles to colleges and other users. Their research, thus far, shows dramatic increases in the risk of a rollover as the number of occupants in a 15-passenger van increases. NHTSA cautions these vans must be operated by trained, experienced drivers; not overloaded; and that all occupants wear their seat belts. NHTSA studies reveal that over the past decade in single 15-passenger van rollover crashes belted occupants had a 92 percent survival rate. NHTSA also cautions about the vans' handling characteristics especially on rural roads or when driving too fast for conditions; the distribution of the weight within the van; and proper maintenance of the tires.

