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Lotus Engineering

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**NHTSA Docket Management
US Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street South West
Room PL-401
Washington
DC 20590**

Attn Docket No. NHTSA-2004-17694 - 25

Comments on proposed changes to FMVSS 214

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1. Whilst Lotus are committed to producing vehicles which combine sporting characteristics with optimised occupant safety, the proliferation of additional crash tests and their cumulative effects are creating an impossibly onerous burden for small volume manufacturers. Small volume manufacturers are by definition endowed with limited resources. NHTSA should consider this fact together with their statutory duty to make standards 'reasonable and practical'.
2. Because the costs of compliance with the proposed requirements are forecast to be far higher than NHTSA originally predicted, and in the case of small volume manufacturers, could be considered to be out of proportion to the likely safety benefits, NHTSA should also consider the financial implications in respect of their statutory duty to make standards 'reasonable and practical'.
3. In view of the current and ongoing efforts to establish harmonised international standards, NHTSA should refrain from introducing additional new side impact requirements such as the proposed 'vehicle to pole' test until the Side Impact Working Group of the International Harmonised Research Activities program has completed it's task.
4. In order to eliminate duplication of testing NHTSA should consider deleting the static testing requirements of FMVSS 214 coincident with the proposed introduction of a 'vehicle to pole' test.
5. Lotus has devoted considerable engineering resource to investigating the problems of compliance with the proposed requirements for the current Lotus single model vehicle range. The indications are that it may prove to be impossible to achieve compliance within any practical and viable limits. Since it is envisaged that this current single model range would remain in production for a further 5 years the introduction of the proposed requirements would obviously have potentially disastrous commercial implications for Lotus.



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6. In view of the conclusions noted in 5 above, Lotus consider that the type of light weight performance vehicle for which Lotus is known, and which Lotus customers would wish to purchase, may have intrinsic characteristics of features and layout which preclude the structural changes required to achieve compliance with the proposed requirements regardless of the resource available.
7. Whilst Lotus appreciates the proposed delay of introduction of the new requirements until the end of the phase in period for small volume manufacturers, it feels bound to ask NHTSA to consider that, in the light of the conclusions put forward in 6 above, no amount of lead time, however long, will allow compliance of Lotus style lightweight performance vehicles of convertible body type without the introduction of some new, and as yet unknown, technology. Lotus therefore feel it is appropriate to request that convertible vehicles are granted exemption from the ' vehicle to pole ' test.

Thank you for your consideration.

For and on behalf of Lotus Engineering.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Burgess". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Burgess, Certification Engineer