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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-2013-0135; Notice 1]

General Motors, LLC, Receipt of Petition for
Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA),
Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Receipt of Petition.

SUMMARY: General Motors, LLC (GM) has determined that certain model year (MY) 2013-2014 Chevrolet Express, GMC Savana, Chevrolet Silverado HD and GMC Sierra HD compressed natural gas (CNG) multipurpose passenger vehicles (MPVs) and trucks manufactured between May 20, 2012, and September 25, 2013, do not fully comply with paragraph S5.3 of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. FMVSS 303, *Fuel System Integrity of Compressed Natural Gas Vehicles*. GM has filed an appropriate report dated November 25, 2013, pursuant to 49 CFR part 573, *Defect and Noncompliance Responsibility and Reports*.

DATES: The closing date for comments on the petition is **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments on this petition. Comments must refer

to the docket and notice number cited at the beginning of this notice and be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Mail: Send comments by mail addressed to: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- Hand Deliver: Deliver comments by hand to: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590. The Docket Section is open on weekdays from 10 am to 5 pm except Federal Holidays.
- Electronically: Submit comments electronically by: logging onto the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) website at <http://www.regulations.gov/>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Comments may also be faxed to (202) 493-2251.

Comments must be written in the English language, and be no greater than 15 pages in length, although there is no limit to the length of necessary attachments to the comments. If comments are submitted in hard copy form, please ensure that two copies are provided. If you wish to receive confirmation that your comments were received, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed

postcard with the comments. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided.

Documents submitted to a docket may be viewed by anyone at the address and times given above. The documents may also be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by following the online instructions for accessing the dockets. DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement is available for review in the Federal Register published on April 11, 2000, (65 FR 19477-78).

The petition, supporting materials, and all comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated below will be filed and will be considered. All comments and supporting materials received after the closing date will also be filed and will be considered to the extent possible. When the petition is granted or denied, notice of the decision will be published in the Federal Register pursuant to the authority indicated below.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. GM's Petition: Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 30118(d) and 30120(h) (see implementing rule at 49 CFR part 556), GM submitted a petition for an exemption from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301 on the basis that this noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

This notice of receipt of GM's petition is published under 49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120 and does not represent any agency decision or other exercise of judgment concerning the merits of the petition.

II. Vehicles Involved: Affected are approximately 2,247 MY 2013-2014 Chevrolet Express, GMC Savana, Chevrolet Silverado HD and GMC Sierra HD compressed natural gas (CNG) MPVs and trucks manufactured between May 20, 2012, and September 25, 2013.

III. Noncompliance: GM explains that the noncompliance is an error on the vehicles CNG labels. Specifically, the lettering height on the labels is 2.5 mm instead of the minimum 4.76 mm as required by paragraph S5.3 of FMVSS No. 303.

IV. Rule Text: Paragraph S5.3 of FMVSS No. 303 requires:

S5.3 Each CNG vehicle shall be permanently labeled, near the vehicle refueling connection, with the information specified in S5.3.1 and S5.3.2 of this section. The information shall be visible to a person standing next to the vehicle during refueling, in English, and in letters and numbers that are not less than 4.76 mm (3/16 inch) high.

S5.3.1 The statement: "Service pressure __ kPa (__ psig)."

S5.3.2 The statement "See instructions on fuel container for inspection and service life."

V. Summary of GM's Analyses: GM stated its belief that the subject noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety for the following reasons:

- A. The information on the subject CNG labels is correct and entirely legible.

Paragraph S5.4 of FMVSS No. 303 requires that the information required for the label also be included in the owner's manual using "... not less than 10 point type." The 2.5 mm lettering height on the subject labels is 10 point type, i.e., the same lettering size as what is specified for the owner's manual content. The 10 point type that is legible for purposes of the owner's manual is also legible on the labels installed at the CNG filler port.

- B. The subject CNG label is an "information" label, not a "warning" label.

The subject label is not a "warning" label and does not warn the user of a safety related risk or consequence. Even if the user does not read the label information due to the font size, the user will not miss information about a safety risk.

- C. The label font size does not create a risk of misfueling.

Even if the user fails to read the information label due to the reduced font size, there would be no adverse safety consequence. The service pressure of the subject CNG tanks is 3,600 psi. There is no risk of over-pressuring these tanks since CNG filling stations are required to

shutoff at 3,600 psi, per ANSI/IAS NGV 4.2-1999 CSA 12.52-M99(R09). Accordingly, there is no risk of a fuel leak.

Even if the shutoff function on a filling station were to malfunction, all CNG tanks on the affected vehicles are equipped with pressure-relief devices designed to deploy at 5,400 psi, which is below the burst pressure of the tank itself.

With regard to under-pressure (under-fill) potential, all affected vehicles are equipped with a CNG fuel gauge in the instrument cluster to inform the driver of the fuel level. While some drivers may estimate the driving range associated with a full fill, most drivers typically rely on fuel gauges, not anticipated range, to determine when to refuel. Some CNG filling stations, primarily in Canada, are designed to shutoff at 3,000 psi, which is below the 3,600 psi service pressure of the affected CNG tanks. However, regardless of whether the CNG tanks on the affected vehicles start out full (3,600 psi) or 83% full (3,000 psi), the driver has ample opportunity to monitor the fuel gauge and refuel prior to the CNG being depleted. Additionally, the owner manual instructs that "the fuel gauge has been calibrated to display full at approximately 24 800 kPa (3,600 psi)..."

Finally, there is no risk that a customer would attempt to fuel the CNG tanks from a conventional gasoline pump. The fueling nozzle and filling port for CNG are completely distinct from the corresponding nozzle and port used for gasoline, and the distinctions are obvious. In the extraordinary event that a user attempted to connect a conventional gasoline nozzle to the CNG fueling valve, it would be immediately apparent that the mismatched gasoline nozzle does not attach to or work with the CNG valve.

GM also asserts that owners and operators of CNG vehicles (the large majority being fleet purchasers) are well aware that their vehicles use a non-conventional fuel, and are attuned to the unique characteristics associated with CNG use, such as service pressure, and tank inspection and replacement provisions. These aspects of the CNG fuel system are likely known to owners when or even before they purchase the CNG vehicle, and in any event are easily obtained for the subject vehicles from the labels at the fueling port, from the vehicle owner's manuals, and/or from the labels on the CNG tanks themselves. As mentioned above, the information is provided in the owner's manual.

In addition, GM stated its belief that NHTSA has previously granted petitions for labeling related inconsequential

noncompliances that GM believes can be applied to a decision on its petition.

GM informed NHTSA that it is not aware of any crashes, injuries or customer complaints associated with this condition.

GM also informed NHTSA that it has corrected the noncompliance for all future production.

In summation, GM believes that the described noncompliance of the subject vehicles is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety, and that its petition, to exempt from providing recall notification of noncompliance as required by 49 U.S.C. 30118 and remedying the recall noncompliance as required by 49 U.S.C. 30120 should be granted.

NHTSA notes that the statutory provisions (49 U.S.C. 30118(d) and 30120(h)) that permit manufacturers to file petitions for a determination of inconsequentiality allow NHTSA to exempt manufacturers only from the duties found in sections 30118 and 30120, respectively, to notify owners, purchasers, and dealers of a defect or noncompliance and to remedy the defect or noncompliance. Therefore, any decision on this petition only applies to the subject noncompliant vehicles that GM no longer controlled at the time it determined that the noncompliance existed. However, any decision on this petition does not relieve motor vehicle distributors and dealers of the prohibitions on the sale, offer for sale, or introduction or

delivery for introduction into interstate commerce of the noncompliant motor vehicles under their control after GM notified them that the subject noncompliance existed.

Authority: (49 U.S.C. 30118, 30120: delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.95 and 501.8)

Claude H. Harris, Director,
Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.

Billing Code: 4910-59-P

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