



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

KATHY HOCHUL
GOVERNOR

September 15, 2023

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Syracuse Automobile Dealers Association
770 James Street, The Towers
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Mr. Robert Vancavage
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Mr. Brad McAreavy
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Mr. Mark Schienberg
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Greater NY Automobile Dealers Association
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Mr. Chris Neuber
President
Eastern NY Coalition of Automotive
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4 Pine West Plaza
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Albany, NY 12205

Mr. Paul Stasiak
President
Niagara Frontier Automobile Dealers
Association, Inc.
1144 Wehrle Drive
Williamsville, NY 14221

Dear Automobile Dealer Partners:

The safety of every New Yorker is my top priority and the State takes very seriously our responsibility to maintain safe roadways for all users. As you are undoubtedly aware, car thefts in New York and around the country are on the rise, largely due to a recently-publicized social media challenge promoting exploitation of the lack of an immobilizer on certain models of Kia and Hyundai vehicles.

Today I presented a five-pronged approach to reverse the alarming trend of increased car

thefts, focused on engaging the community, increased enforcement and prosecution, public awareness and community funding aimed at diversion. Specifically, I have directed the Department of Motor Vehicles to contact known owners of these vulnerable vehicles and point them to resources to protect their assets. In turn I am asking you and your members, as motor vehicle dealers, to prioritize repair or remediation of the defects in the impacted vehicles to the maximum extent possible. This includes facilitating the installation of the anti-theft software update announced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) earlier this year, free of charge.¹ Vehicle owners that seek to address these defects, caused by no fault of their own, are attempting to do the right thing and protect themselves and others. Additionally, I ask for your participation and partnership in public awareness campaigns and engagement in stakeholder discussions.

All too often, stolen Kia and Hyundai vehicles are used in the commission of other crimes and are operated recklessly. Kia, in a statement to the Buffalo News, admitted that “[i]n many cases, the vehicles are stolen solely for the purpose of operating in a reckless and dangerous manner.”² Additionally, many individuals participating in the theft of these vehicles are unlicensed and are often not old enough to be licensed. Their operation of these vehicles has led to an unreasonable risk of death or injury in an accident, as we tragically saw in my home city of Buffalo last November where four young people were killed. Similar incidents are happening across the State with increasing and alarming frequency.

As a presence in nearly every community in the state of New York, auto dealers are uniquely situated to assist in this effort. The State continues to explore all options that will equitably resolve this problem for vehicle owners and road users. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us protect New Yorkers and maintain public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Hochul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Kathy Hochul
Governor

¹ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/hyundai-kia-campaign-prevent-vehicle-theft>

² https://buffalonews.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/this-whole-situation-has-been-a-nightmare-victims-of-stolen-kias-share-their-tales/article_99711194-5abf-11ed-b936-071dc4784a6c.html