



# ARIZONA STATE LODGE

## Fraternal Order of Police, Inc.

**Bryan G. Soller**  
President

July 2, 2003

**Patrick Scherden**  
Secretary

Mr. William Clay Ford Jr.  
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer  
Ford Motor Company  
P.O. Box 6248  
Dearborn, MI. 48126

Dear Mr. Ford,

The Arizona Fraternal Order of Police (Arizona F.O.P.) is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the State of Arizona with approximately 6000 members. The Fraternal Order of Police Grand Lodge is the largest law enforcement organization in the country with over 306,000 members. I am writing this letter on behalf of all of the Arizona F.O.P. members and their families who have dedicated their lives to protecting and serving our state, counties, and local communities. The Arizona F.O.P. last year (June 2002) adopted a resolution stating that the F.O.P. recognizes that there is an inherent design flaw in the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor that causes the gas tank to explode upon rear impacts. Arizona lost three of its finest, Officer Juan Cruz, Floyd (Skip) Fink, and Robert Nielsen, to horrific and terrorizing deaths while trapped inside their burning Crown Victoria's. Arizona also had one of its finest, Jason Schechterle, terribly burned and disfigured when his Crown Victoria burst into flames upon being struck in a rear end collision.

The Arizona F.O.P. has never believed that the shielding of the fuel tank components on the Ford Crown Victoria was the proper response from the Ford Motor Company; we believe that redesigning and changing the placement of the fuel tank is the only way to solve the problem. The Arizona F.O.P. gave the Arizona Blue Ribbon Panel a chance to work with Ford to come up with practical solutions to the Ford Crown Victoria's fuel problem while Janet Napolitano served as the Attorney General. Unfortunately it appears that Ford is trying to take the cheapest and easiest way out of its responsibility to produce the safest vehicle possible and is shirking its moral obligation to our members in law enforcement. We now know that the shielding that your company placed on the Crown Victoria's has proven to be no fix at all. In just the month of May, Missouri Trooper Michael Newton and North Carolina Trooper Anthony Cogdill died horrific deaths in fiery rear end crashes and two other Ford Crown Victoria's burst into flames in rear end crashes but were unoccupied at the time. **All of these Crown Victoria's had the Ford recommended shielding installed and all caught fire upon rear end impact.** There have been 16 tragic deaths of law enforcement officers across the country since 1983 due to fires caused by rear end collisions to the Crown Victoria; several other officers have been seriously burned and nearly killed.

The Arizona State F.O.P. is calling upon our Governor and Attorney General to fight for the safety of the Arizona law enforcement officers across our state and to fight your company's reluctance to investigate other alternatives to make the Ford Crown Victoria a safer vehicle. We will not just sit by until another officer is either burned alive or severely injured due to Ford's reluctance to take the proper steps to protect law enforcement officers from the inherent design flaw in the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor. We depended on your company to help us in this fight to do the right thing and prevent any more horrific deaths, but you just turned a deaf ear to our calls for help. The Arizona Blue Ribbon Panel

has been ineffective to this point in convincing your company to modify the design and location of the fuel tank, add fuel bladders, incorporate designed trunk packs, or install fire suppression systems to all of the Crown Victoria Police Interceptors currently in service. Ford seems to be more worried about financial cost rather than human suffering; their faulty design has cost those officers, their families, and their fellow officers. We are calling on our Governor and Attorney General to look at every means to make you and the Ford Motor Company take responsibility and make the necessary corrections to ensure no other officers die or are injured in the fiery inferno that was once their Crown Victoria Police Interceptor. You and the Ford Motor Company must be held accountable and be made to take full responsibility for the design flaw and inaction up to now. It is a crime against humanity to know there are alternatives to save human lives from being burned alive and then fight against doing so just to save a few dollars.

The Arizona State Fraternal Order of Police is asking all of its members that drive gasoline Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptors to give great consideration before placing themselves in a position of being in a high-speed rear-end collision. Officers need to understand that the gasoline Ford Crown Victoria, even equipped with Ford recommended safety shields, may be a fiery inferno just waiting to happen. All law enforcement agencies and officers should take every precaution not to put their employees or themselves into an avoidable situation. The Arizona Fraternal Order of Police is calling on the Governor, Attorney General, all senators and representatives, all law enforcement agencies, and all officers to join in the fight to force Ford Motor Company to act responsibly.

The Arizona Fraternal Order of Police may be looking into a boycott of all Ford products and vehicles by all agencies, family members of officers, and the public in general as long as the Ford Motor Company refuses to take responsibility and make the Ford Crown Victoria a safe vehicle for law enforcement officers to drive. We cannot afford the preventable loss of another one of our finest. It is time to stop the needless carnage and death caused by the design flaw of your company's Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor and to protect our members and fellow law enforcement officers not only in Arizona, but also across the country. We would like to have an honest answer as to why your company is unwilling to look at adding fire suppression to all of the new Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptors and retrofitting the Crown Victoria's on the street at this time. Ultimately, we would like Ford to redesign the gas tank placing it forward of the rear axle.

Sincerely,

Bryan G. Soller

**Bryan G. Soller**

President

Arizona State Lodge

Fraternal Order of Police



## ARIZONA STATE LODGE Fraternal Order of Police, Inc.

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**Bryan G. Soller**  
President

July 24, 2003

**Patrick Scherden**  
Secretary

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Arizona Governor  
1700 West Washington Street, 9th Floor  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Napolitano:

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the State of Arizona, and with over 306,000 members, it is the largest in the country. I am writing on behalf of all Arizona F.O.P. members and their families who have dedicated their lives to protecting and serving our state, counties, and local communities. The Arizona F.O.P. has adopted a resolution articulating its belief that there are inherent design flaws in the Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor (CVPI), which causes the gas tank to explode during high-speed rear impacts. Arizona lost three of its finest Officers, Juan Cruz, Floyd (Skip) Fink, and Robert Nielsen, to horrific and terrorizing deaths while trapped inside their burning CVPIs. Arizona also had one of its finest, Jason Schechterle, terribly burned and disfigured when his Crown Victoria burst into flames upon being struck in a rear end collision.

The Arizona F.O.P. has never believed the shielding of the fuel tank components on the CVPI to be the only proper response from the Ford Motor Company. The Arizona F.O.P. believes that a design modification to move the location of the fuel tank, or retrofitting with bladders and fire suppression systems are the only ways to solve this problem.

The Blue Ribbon Panel had its opportunity to work with Ford to develop solutions to the CVPI fuel problems. Unfortunately, it appears Ford is trying to take the cheapest and easiest way out of its responsibility to produce the safest vehicle possible, and shirking its moral obligation to the safety of our members in law enforcement. We now know the shielding Ford placed on the CVPIs has proven to be no fix at all. In just the month of May, Missouri Trooper Michael Newton and North Carolina Trooper Anthony Cogdill died horrific deaths in fiery rear end crashes, and two other CVPIs burst into flames in rear end crashes, which were unoccupied at the time. All of these CVPIs had the Ford recommended shielding installed and all burst in flames upon rear end impact. There have been 16 tragic deaths of law enforcement officers across the country since 1983 due to fires caused by rear end collisions to the CVPIs. Several more have been seriously burned and nearly killed.

The Arizona State F.O.P. is calling upon you and Attorney General Goddard to aggressively fight for the safety of Arizona law enforcement officers and to assertively confront Ford's reluctance to investigate and develop other alternatives to make the CVPI a safer vehicle. We cannot passively sit-by until another officer is either burned alive or severely injured as a result of Ford's reluctance to take the proper steps to protect law enforcement officers from inherent design flaws in the CVPI. We depend on you, our elected officials, to help us in this fight to do the right thing and prevent any more horrific deaths. The Blue Ribbon Panel has largely been ineffective to this point in persuading Ford to

modify the design and location of the fuel tank, retrofit fuel bladders, design trunk packs, and install fire suppression systems into all of the CVPIs currently in service. We must pressure Ford to correct these design flaws, even if it means filing civil or criminal actions against Ford. We must try to ensure no other officers die or are injured in the fiery inferno that was once their CVPI. Ford must be held accountable and be made to take full responsibility for its design flaws and inaction up to now. It is a crime against humanity to know there are alternatives to save human lives from being burned alive and then resist doing so simply to save a few dollars.

The Arizona State Fraternal Order of Police is asking all of its members who drive gasoline powered Ford CVPIs to give great consideration before placing themselves in a position of potential involvement in a high-speed rear end collision. Officers need to understand the gasoline powered CVPI, even equipped with Ford recommended safety shields, may be a fiery inferno just waiting to happen. All law enforcement agencies and officers should take every precaution to avoid placing their employees or themselves into an avoidable situation. The Arizona Fraternal Order of Police is calling upon you, Attorney General Goddard, all law enforcement agencies, and all officers to join in the fight to compel Ford to act responsibly. Working together with other states and departments across the country, we will be able to successfully address Ford's reluctance to make necessary changes to protect our law enforcement officers, not only in Arizona, but also across our country. It is time to stop the needless carnage and death caused by design flaws of the CVPI and to protect our members and fellow law enforcement officers.

Please advise me of any questions regarding this matter. I may be contacted at telephone number (480) 226-0149.

Very Truly Yours,

Bryan G. Soller

**Bryan G. Soller**

President

Arizona State Lodge

Fraternal Order of Police

cc: Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard  
Pat McGroder  
Chuck Canterbury, President, Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police



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July 24, 2003

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Arizona Attorney General  
1275 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

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