

vehicles to be tested with all doors locked could result in a reduction of the stringency of the test conditions and detract from safety.

Finally, GM did not present any technical data in support of its assertion that allowing doors to be locked in the impact tests of FMVSS Nos. 208 and 214 would encourage manufacturers to install ADLs in their vehicles. Moreover, there is no evidence that ADLs will necessarily result in better occupant protection. Manufacturers have been complying with FMVSS Nos. 208 and 214 with the doors closed and latched, but not locked. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that manufacturers would be motivated to install ADLs based upon the requested amendment to these standards, particularly if there were an additional associated cost. ADL components are likely to be more

expensive than standard mechanical locks, and electrical ADL circuitry in the vehicle environment could be more vulnerable to damage/repair/recall issues. Based on the foregoing reasons, the agency is not convinced that such an amendment by NHTSA would accelerate the installation of ADLs in future vehicles, nor that such acceleration would yield a safety benefit.

Conclusion: Based upon the above analyses, we do not believe that there is sufficient reason to conclude that amending FMVSS Nos. 208 and 214 as petitioned would be appropriate or provide a safety benefit. Conducting research to determine whether or not ADLs could provide a safety benefit, to develop performance requirements for the various ADL designs, and to establish consumer acceptance of the

various designs would take considerable time and is not included in the agency's current research plan.

In accordance with 49 CFR part 552, this completes the agency's review of the petition for rulemaking. The agency has concluded that there is no reasonable possibility that the amendments requested by the petitioner would be issued at the conclusion of the rulemaking proceeding. Accordingly, the petition for rulemaking is denied.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30103, 30162; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

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Stephen R. Kratzke,

Associate Administrator for Rulemaking.

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