



Liberal MP wants Toyota probe details

By Althia Raj

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OTTAWA — After the United States slapped Toyota Motor Corp. with a \$16 million fine for "knowingly" putting consumers at risk, a Liberal MP wants to know what the federal government plans to do with its investigation of the troubled company.

Liberal transport critic Joe Volpe wrote to Transport Minister John Baird Tuesday requesting an update on the government's investigation as well as what its plans are to protect Canadian drivers and "the integrity of Canadian laws."

Volpe cited evidence the U.S. regulator obtained showing Toyota was aware as early as September 29, 2009 that problems existed with sticky accelerator pedals. The company issued repair procedures to distributors in Canada and 31 countries that day to address complaints of sticky accelerator pedals, sudden increases in engine RPM, and sudden vehicle acceleration.

Toyota issued a recall on Jan. 21, 2010. That was nearly four months after discovering the problem, a violation of the regulations which requires manufacturers notify the minister and owners on becoming aware of a defect, said Volpe.

"There are serious legal (criminal) issues if Toyota is found in contravention of the act," Volpe writes Baird.

Toyota Canada's managing director Stephen Beatty told MPs on the transport committee last month, the company wasn't sure what it was faced with when a first case of sticky pedal causing untended acceleration was reported in late October.