

FILE NAME: Ford (FD)

DATE: 2000 Sept 12

DOC#: FD001

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter to Ford from BC RE Global Asbestos Policy with Attachments



Barry Castleman, Sc.D. Environmental Consultant

September 12, 2000

Mr. William C. Ford, Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Ford Motor Company
1 American Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Global Asbestos Policy

Dear Mr. Ford,

Almost four months ago I wrote to you about the giant auto makers' variable uses of asbestos around the world, a patchwork of exploiting widely divergent pressures of public awareness, regulation, and compensation around the world. I asked you to consider establishing a global policy to eliminate asbestos, whose necessity in vehicle brakes, clutches, and gaskets, etc., has long passed.

My interests in global corporate policies on health, safety, and environment go beyond asbestos, of course, and I have urged a sort of public competition between leading corporations to open the way toward the globalization of public health measures along with markets. My theme has been the elimination of corporate "double standards" in health, safety, and environmental protection. Perhaps the company's present difficulties arising from poorly coordinated responses to product defects can serve the useful purpose of helping to make the case for global policies which are implemented and inspire public confidence.

So I take the occasion, as the WTO prepares to announce its decision in the asbestos case on September 18, to again send you my previous letter and request your response about Ford Motor Company's global policy on asbestos. Now would be a good time for your company to make a public commitment to phase out the use of asbestos parts in original equipment and the after-market as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Castleman", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Enclosures:

- My letter to you of May 15, 2000
- "The need for an investigation of global corporate policies on health, safety, and environment"



Barry Castleman, Sc.D. Environmental Consultant

May 15, 2000

Mr. William C. Ford, Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Ford Motor Company
1 American Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Global Asbestos Policy

Dear Mr. Ford:

I was encouraged to write by the complimentary editorial in the *New York Times* today, quoting you on the notion of social liability.

In the past, I have approached each of the Big Three U.S. auto makers about whether they have a global policy for eliminating the use of asbestos. An editorial I published about the disappointing results is enclosed. Since this was published in 1998, the European Union has decided that all member countries must ban asbestos by 2005, following existing national asbestos bans by all the leading economic powers of Europe. Brazil has announced that it will follow the E.U. timetable, too, and the World Trade Organization is about to throw out Canada's challenge to the national asbestos ban in France (I am a scientific adviser to the European Commission in that case, in which a decision will soon be announced).

Two years ago, I found that none of the big auto companies would tell me if they had a global policy for eliminating asbestos in new vehicles and in the after-market. I learned that General Motors was still making some cars in North America with asbestos brakes, though such brakes were banned in original equipment and the after-market in the major European countries. And though G.M. had managed to find suitable, safer substitutes for asbestos engine gaskets years earlier in North America, they were still using asbestos engine gaskets in Brazil. Even Swedish and German companies were found to be using asbestos-containing parts in Brazil, years after having had to cease the use of asbestos in their home markets. My editorial concluded, "Will any globally asbestos-free auto makers step forward and lead the rest?"

I am writing to know if Ford has (or is developing) a global policy on phasing out asbestos in its products, and if so what that policy is. I would also like to know the extent to which asbestos is used in automotive friction materials and gaskets in products marketed today by Ford in each of the regions of the world where asbestos has not been banned (North America, South America, Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia).

I hope that Ford leadership is sufficiently impressed with the notion of social liability to make the corporation a leader in the industry in getting rid of this needlessly dangerous material worldwide, and soon. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: "Globally Asbestos-free Automobiles" editorial, 1998.

Ford Motor's Environmental Candor

The Ford Motor Company offered a surprisingly honest assessment last week of the environmental and safety hazards of sport utility vehicles, one of the company's most profitable products. The assessment, in the company's "corporate citizenship report" to shareholders, may herald an era of heightened environmental consciousness at the industrial giant in response to consumer demands for safer, more socially responsible vehicles.

S.U.V.'s, minivans and pickup trucks are allowed under current federal law to emit substantially more smog-creating tailpipe gases than cars. This loophole in the law threatens to destroy gains in air quality because these big vehicles now make up nearly half of all new vehicle purchases. They are less fuel efficient than cars, and therefore generate more greenhouse gases. They also pose special dangers for passengers in other cars during crashes because of their size and design.

Ford will not stop selling S.U.V.'s, but it has made some improvements in them. It now voluntarily makes all of its S.U.V.'s, minivans and pick-

ups far cleaner in standard tailpipe emissions than required by federal law. Last December, the company pulled out of the Global Climate Coalition, a group of heavy-industry companies that lobbies against restrictions on emissions of gases connected to global warming. It recently announced that it will introduce a smaller, more efficient S.U.V. with a hybrid gasoline-electric engine in 2003.

Many observers say that Ford's actions are driven by its chairman, William C. Ford Jr., who has been involved in environmental causes. But Mr. Ford is also a businessman. He says in an interview in the report: "Not so long ago, cars and trucks were things to aspire to. But very recently there's been a change. Now the whole notion of social liability has crept in. So people still love their car, but hate everybody else's. That's a dangerous trend."

As a result, Mr. Ford appears eager to make cars that are more socially acceptable. Consumers are beginning to consider the environmental reputation of S.U.V.'s, and automakers will have to compete on that basis.

NYT May 15, 2000