

based, the company may have to submit a petition to modify the exemption. Section 543.8(d) states that a part 543 exemption applies only to vehicles that belong to a line exempted under this part and equipped with the antitheft device on which the line's exemption is based. Further, section 543.10(c)(2) provides for the submission of petitions "to modify an exemption to permit the use of an antitheft device similar to but differing from the one specified in the exemption."

The Agency wishes to minimize the administrative burden that section 543.10(c)(2) could place on exempted vehicle manufacturers and itself. The Agency did not intend in drafting part 543 to require the submission of a modification petition for every change to the components or design of an antitheft device. The significance of many such changes could be de minimis. Therefore, NHTSA suggests that if Volkswagen contemplates making any changes, the effects of which might be characterized as de minimis, it should consult the Agency before preparing and submitting a petition to modify.

For the foregoing reasons, the Agency hereby grants in full Volkswagen's petition for exemption for the ID.7 vehicle line from the parts-marking requirements of 49 CFR part 541, beginning with its MY 2025 vehicles.

Issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.95 and 501.8.

Raymond R. Posten,

Associate Administrator for Rulemaking.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Petition for Exemption From the Federal Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard; Toyota Motor North America, Inc.

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Grant of petition for exemption.

SUMMARY: This document grants in full the Toyota Motor North America, Inc.'s (Toyota) petition for exemption from the Federal Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard (theft prevention standard) for its Subaru Solterra vehicle line beginning in model year (MY) 2025. The petition is granted because the Agency has determined that the antitheft device to be placed on the line as standard

equipment is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of the theft prevention standard. Toyota also requested confidential treatment for specific information in its petition. Therefore, no confidential information provided for purposes of this notice has been disclosed.

DATES: The exemption granted by this notice is effective beginning with the 2025 model year.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Carlita Ballard, Office of International Policy, Fuel Economy, and Consumer Programs, NHTSA, West Building, W43-439, NRM-310, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590. Ms. Ballard's phone number is (202) 366-5222. Her fax number is (202) 493-2990.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under 49 U.S.C. chapter 331, the Secretary of Transportation (and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) by delegation) is required to promulgate a theft prevention standard to provide for the identification of certain motor vehicles and their major replacement parts to impede motor vehicle theft. NHTSA promulgated regulations at 49 CFR part 541 (theft prevention standard) to require parts-marking for specified passenger motor vehicles and light trucks. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 33106, manufacturers that are subject to the parts-marking requirements may petition the Secretary of Transportation for an exemption for a line of passenger motor vehicles equipped with an antitheft device as standard equipment that the Secretary decides is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements. In accordance with this statute, NHTSA promulgated 49 CFR part 543, which establishes the process through which manufacturers may seek an exemption from the theft prevention standard.

49 CFR 543.5 provides general submission requirements for petitions and states that each manufacturer may petition NHTSA for an exemption of one vehicle line per model year. Among other requirements, manufacturers must identify whether the exemption is sought under section 543.6 or section 543.7. Under section 543.6, a manufacturer may request an exemption by providing specific information about the antitheft device, its capabilities, and the reasons the petitioner believes the device to be as effective at reducing and deterring theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements. Section 543.7 permits a manufacturer to request

an exemption under a more streamlined process if the vehicle line is equipped with an antitheft device (an "immobilizer") as standard equipment that complies with one of the standards specified in that section.¹

Section 543.8 establishes requirements for processing petitions for exemption from the theft prevention standard. As stated in section 543.8(a), NHTSA processes any complete exemption petition. If NHTSA receives an incomplete petition, NHTSA will notify the petitioner of the deficiencies. Once NHTSA receives a complete petition the Agency will process it and, in accordance with section 543.8(b), will grant the petition if it determines that, based upon substantial evidence, the standard equipment antitheft device is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of part 541.

Section 543.8(c) requires NHTSA to issue its decision either to grant or to deny an exemption petition not later than 120 days after the date on which a complete petition is filed. If NHTSA does not make a decision within the 120-day period, the petition shall be deemed to be approved and the manufacturer shall be exempt from the standard for the line covered by the petition for the subsequent model year.² Exemptions granted under part 543 apply only to the vehicle line or lines that are subject to the grant and that are equipped with the antitheft device on which the line's exemption was based, and are effective for the model year beginning after the model year in which NHTSA issues the notice of exemption, unless the notice of exemption specifies a later year.

Sections 543.8(f) and (g) apply to the manner in which NHTSA's decisions on petitions are to be made known. Under section 543.8(f), if the petition is sought

¹ 49 CFR 543.7 specifies that the manufacturer must include a statement that their entire vehicle line is equipped with an immobilizer that meets one of the following standards:

(1) The performance criteria (subsections 8 through 21) of C.R.C., c. 1038.114, *Theft Protection and Rollaway Prevention (in effect March 30, 2011)*, as excerpted in appendix A of [part 543];

(2) National Standard of Canada CAN/ULC-S338-98, *Automobile Theft Deterrent Equipment and Systems: Electronic Immobilization* (May 1998);

(3) United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) Regulation No. 97 (ECE R97), *Uniform Provisions Concerning Approval of Vehicle Alarm System (VAS) and Motor Vehicles with Regard to Their Alarm System (AS)* in effect August 8, 2007; or

(4) UN/ECE Regulation No. 116 (ECE R116), *Uniform Technical Prescriptions Concerning the Protection of Motor Vehicles Against Unauthorized Use* in effect on February 10, 2009.

² 49 U.S.C. 33106(d).

under section 543.6, NHTSA publishes a notice of its decision to grant or deny the exemption petition in the **Federal Register** and notifies the petitioner in writing. Under section 543.8(g), if the petition is sought under section 543.7, NHTSA notifies the petitioner in writing of the Agency's decision to grant or deny the exemption petition.

This grant of petition for exemption considers Toyota Motor North America, Inc.'s (Toyota) petition for its Subaru Solterra vehicle line beginning in MY 2025.

I. Specific Petition Content Requirements Under 49 CFR 543.6

Pursuant to 49 CFR part 543, Exemption from Vehicle Theft Prevention, Toyota petitioned for an exemption for its specified vehicle line from the parts-marking requirements of the theft prevention standard, beginning in MY 2025. Toyota petitioned under 49 CFR 543.6, Petition: Specific content requirements, which, as described above, requires manufacturers to provide specific information about the antitheft device installed as standard equipment on all vehicles in the line for which an exemption is sought, the antitheft device's capabilities, and the reasons the petitioner believes the device to be as effective at reducing and deterring theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements.

More specifically, section 543.6(a)(1) requires petitions to include a statement that an antitheft device will be installed as standard equipment on all vehicles in the line for which the exemption is sought. Under section 543.6(a)(2), each petition must list each component in the antitheft system and include a diagram showing the location of each of those components within the vehicle. As required by section 543.6(a)(3), each petition must include an explanation of the means and process by which the device is activated and functions, including any aspect of the device designed to: (1) facilitate or encourage its activation by motorists; (2) attract attention to the efforts of an unauthorized person to enter or move a vehicle by means other than a key; (3) prevent defeating or circumventing the device by an unauthorized person attempting to enter a vehicle by means other than a key; (4) prevent the operation of a vehicle which an unauthorized person has entered using means other than a key; and (5) ensure the reliability and durability of the device.³

In addition to providing information about the antitheft device and its

functionality, petitioners must also submit the reasons for their belief that the antitheft device will be effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft, including any theft data and other data that are available to the petitioner and form a basis for that belief,⁴ and the reasons for their belief that the Agency should determine that the antitheft device is likely to be as effective as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of part 541 in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft. In support of this belief, the petitioners should include any statistical data that are available to the petitioner and form the basis for the petitioner's belief that a line of passenger motor vehicles equipped with the antitheft device is likely to have a theft rate equal to or less than that of passenger motor vehicles of the same, or a similar, line which have parts marked in compliance with part 541.⁵

The following sections describe Toyota's petition information provided pursuant to 49 CFR part 543, Exemption from Vehicle Theft Prevention. To the extent that specific information in Toyota's petition is subject to a properly filed confidentiality request, that information was not disclosed as part of this notice.⁶

II. Toyota's Petition for Exemption

In a petition dated November 7, 2023, Toyota requested an exemption from the parts-marking requirements of the theft prevention standard for the Subaru Solterra vehicle line beginning with MY 2025.

In its petition, Toyota provided a detailed description and diagram of the identity, design, and location of the components of the antitheft device for the Subaru Solterra vehicle line. Toyota stated that its MY 2025 Subaru Solterra vehicle line will be installed with an engine immobilizer device as standard equipment, as required by 543.6(a)(1). Toyota stated that it will offer "smart entry and start" system on its Subaru Solterra vehicle line. Specifically, key components of the "smart entry and start" system will include a certification engine control unit (ECU), engine switch, security indicator, door control receiver, electrical key, ID code box, and an engine control module (ECM). Toyota stated that there will also be position switches installed on the vehicle to protect the hood and doors from unauthorized tampering/opening. Toyota further explained that locking the doors can be accomplished through

use of a key, wireless switch or its smart entry system, and that unauthorized tampering with the hood or door without using one of these methods will cause the position switches to trigger its antitheft device to operate. Toyota will also incorporate an audible and visual alarm system on its vehicle line, when unauthorized access is attempted, the horn will sound and the lights will flash.

Pursuant to Section 543.6(a)(3), Toyota explained that its "smart entry and start" system is activated when the engine switch is pushed from the "ON" ignition status to any other status. The certification ECU then performs the calculation for the immobilizer and the immobilizer signals the ECM to activate the device. Toyota also explained that its "smart entry and start" system is deactivated after the driver pushes the engine switch and the key is verified, the certification ECU and ID code box receives verification of a valid key, the certification ECU allows the ECM to start the engine. Toyota stated that in its system, a security indicator is installed notifying the user and others inside and outside the vehicle with the status of the immobilizer. Toyota further explained that the security indicator flashes continuously when the immobilizer is activated and turns off when it is deactivated.

As required in section 543.6(a)(3)(v), Toyota provided information on the reliability and durability of its proposed device. To ensure reliability and durability of the device, Toyota conducted tests based on its own specified standards. Toyota provided a detailed list of the tests conducted (*i.e.*, high and low temperature operation, strength, impact, vibration, electromagnetic interference, etc.). Toyota stated that it believes that its device is reliable and durable because it complied with its own specific design standards and the antitheft device is installed on other vehicle lines for which the Agency has granted a parts-marking exemption. As an additional measure of reliability and durability, Toyota stated that its vehicle key cylinders are covered with casting cases to prevent the key cylinder from easily being broken. Toyota further explained that there are approximately 20,000 combinations for the key cylinders and key plates for outer gutter keys and about 10,000 for the inner gutter keys which makes it difficult to unlock the doors without using a valid key because the key cylinders would spin out and cause the locks to not operate.

Toyota stated that its Subaru Solterra vehicle has already been equipped with an immobilizer since MY 2023 as

⁴ 49 CFR 543.6(a)(4).

⁵ 49 CFR 543.6(a)(5).

⁶ 49 CFR 512.20(a).

³ 49 CFR 543.6(a)(3).

standard equipment. Toyota also stated that at the time of the petition submission, theft rate data for the MY 2025 Subaru Solterra vehicle line is not available. However, Toyota compared its proposed device to other devices NHTSA has determined to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as would compliance with the parts-marking requirements. Toyota also compared its proposed device to a similar type of system which has been installed on the Toyota RAV4 and RAV4 HV vehicle line, which was granted a parts-marking exemption from 49 CFR part 541 by the Agency beginning with MY 2014 vehicles. Toyota also referenced the NHTSA theft rate data published for calendar year 2014 with 1.15 per thousand vehicles produced and showing the average theft rate of 0.36 for the RAV4 and RAV4 HV. Therefore, Toyota concluded that the antitheft device proposed for its Subaru Solterra vehicle line is no less effective than those devices on the lines for which NHTSA has already granted full exemption from the parts-marking requirements. Toyota stated that it believes that installing the immobilizer device as standard equipment reduces the theft rate for the Subaru Solterra vehicle line and expects it to experience comparable effectiveness and ultimately be more effective than parts-marking labels.

III. Decision To Grant the Petition

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 33106 and 49 CFR 543.8(b), the Agency grants a petition for exemption from the parts-marking requirements of part 541, either in whole or in part, if it determines that, based upon substantial evidence, the standard equipment antitheft device is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of part 541. The Agency finds that Toyota has provided adequate reasons for its belief that the antitheft device for its vehicle line is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of the theft prevention standard. This conclusion is based on the information Toyota provided about its antitheft device. NHTSA believes, based on Toyota's supporting evidence, the antitheft device described for its vehicle line is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of the theft prevention standard.

The Agency concludes that Toyota's antitheft device will provide the five

types of performance features listed in section 543.6(a)(3): promoting activation; attracting attention to the efforts of unauthorized persons to enter or operate a vehicle by means other than a key; preventing defeat or circumvention of the device by unauthorized persons; preventing operation of the vehicle by unauthorized entrants; and ensuring the reliability and durability of the device.

The Agency notes that 49 CFR part 541, appendix A–1, identifies those lines that are exempted from the theft prevention standard for a given model year. 49 CFR 543.8(f) contains publication requirements incident to the disposition of all part 543 petitions. Advanced listing, including the release of future product nameplates, the beginning model year for which the petition is granted and a general description of the antitheft device is necessary in order to notify law enforcement agencies of new vehicle lines exempted from the parts-marking requirements of the theft prevention standard.

If Toyota decides not to use the exemption for its requested vehicle line, the manufacturer must formally notify the Agency. If such a decision is made, the line must be fully marked as required by 49 CFR 541.5 and 541.6 (marking of major component parts and replacement parts).

NHTSA notes that if Toyota wishes in the future to modify the device on which this exemption is based, the company may have to submit a petition to modify the exemption. Section 543.8(d) states that a part 543 exemption applies only to vehicles that belong to a line exempted under this part and equipped with the antitheft device on which the line's exemption is based. Further, section 543.10(c)(2) provides for the submission of petitions "to modify an exemption to permit the use of an antitheft device similar to but differing from the one specified in the exemption."⁷

The Agency wishes to minimize the administrative burden that section 543.10(c)(2) could place on exempted vehicle manufacturers and itself. The Agency did not intend in drafting part

⁷ The Agency wishes to minimize the administrative burden that section 543.10(c)(2) could place on exempted vehicle manufacturers and itself. The Agency did not intend in drafting part 543 to require the submission of a modification petition for every change to the components or design of an antitheft device. The significance of many such changes could be de minimis. Therefore, NHTSA suggests that if a manufacturer with an exemption contemplates making any changes, the effects of which might be characterized as de minimis, it should consult the Agency before preparing and submitting a petition to modify.

543 to require the submission of a modification petition for every change to the components or design of an antitheft device. The significance of many such changes could be de minimis. Therefore, NHTSA suggests that if Toyota contemplates making any changes, the effects of which might be characterized as de minimis, it should consult the Agency before preparing and submitting a petition to modify.

For the foregoing reasons, the Agency hereby grants in full Toyota's petition for exemption for the Subaru Solterra vehicle line from the parts-marking requirements of 49 CFR part 541, beginning with its MY 2025 vehicles.

Issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.95 and 501.8.

Raymond R. Posten,

Associate Administrator for Rulemaking.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation

Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation Advisory Board; Notice of Meeting

AGENCY: Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the public meetings of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS) Advisory Board.

DATES: The public meetings will be held on (all times eastern):

- Wednesday, March 6, 2024, from 2 p.m.–4 p.m. EST
 - Requests to attend the meeting must be received by March 1, 2024.
 - Requests for accommodations to a disability must be received by March 1, 2024.
 - If you wish to speak during the meeting, you must submit a written copy of your remarks to GLS by March 1, 2024.
 - Requests to submit written materials to be reviewed during the meeting must be received no later than March 1, 2024.
- Tuesday, May 14, 2024, from 8:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m. EDT
 - Requests to attend the meeting must be received by May 9, 2024.
 - Requests for accommodations to a disability must be received by May 9, 2024.
 - If you wish to speak during the meeting, you must submit a written