



December 3, 2008

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

There have been numerous statements from the Government of Canada signalling that the auto industry is vital to the Canadian economy and that the manufacturing sector must be supported. We couldn't agree more with that assertion.

However, we are concerned that the full scope of the automotive sector has not had the attention of government decision makers. The Automotive Industries Association of Canada (AIA), is the national trade association representing the interests of the automotive aftermarket – the manufacturers, the distributors and the retailers of parts for the automotive service and repair industry. The automotive aftermarket is a \$16.7 Billion industry in Canada that directly employs over 400,000 people, not to mention the thousands employed in ancillary companies. Our industry touches every person who drives a vehicle in every part of Canada and keeps Canadians safely on the road.

Today's vehicles are sophisticated. Repairing them requires computer software accompanied by specialized electronic tools and training. This change in technology to electronic delivery of information has allowed sixty percent of the car companies that sell vehicles in Canada to refuse to make repair software, tools and training commercially available to the independent service and repair industry. Without these tools and software - which many newer vehicles rely upon - our members will be forced out of business. The network of thousands of shops around Canada, many of whom are the only service option for their community, will simply disappear along with the supply chain that currently supports them. You can imagine the resulting impacts on local economies across Canada with the elimination of consumer choice and the pressures that it will exert on the supply side of the service and repair industry.

In an effort to formulate a voluntary agreement, AIA has over the last two years provided strong evidence to the federal government regarding the need to ensure that these tools and technology are made available to our service and repair members. We have met with all involved Ministers at the federal level. During the recent federal election we made a concerted effort to reach every candidate in every riding to gain their support for the local service and repair providers in your community. You should be aware that the software, tools and training are available to independent automotive service and repair shops in the US – we are calling for the same level playing field in Canada that is available to our US counterparts. The automotive sector functions within a North American marketplace and why should Canadian automotive aftermarket companies be treated any differently than their US counterparts?



-2-

Today we ask for your assistance to ensure that your fellow Canadians - both consumers and auto service industry workers - receive the commitment from the federal government that they require. We are asking that the consumers right to choose be protected.

As your government considers financial assistance to the Canadian auto manufacturing industry, the AIA requests this support be conditional upon assurance that local automotive service and repair businesses will have access to the tools and technology needed for maintaining the vehicles that belong to people living in communities across Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc Brazeau', written in a cursive style.

Marc Brazeau  
President

c.c.:

Tony Clement, Minister of Industry

Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance

John Baird, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development

Rona Ambrose, Minister of Labour

Lisa Raitt, Minister of Natural Resources

Stockwell Day, Minister of International Trade