

Rearview Cameras Still Delayed, Consumer Groups Sue DOT

By [Suzanne Kane](#) 676 views [Sep 25, 2013](#)



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The Department of Transportation (DOT) is the target of a lawsuit filed today in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, in New York, by safety advocates and two parents who unintentionally backed over their children. The lawsuit asks the court to direct the DOT to issue a backover rule within 90 days and monitor the DOT's compliance with the court's order. The Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act of 2008 directed the DOT to issue a rule requiring significantly improved rear visibility in new consumer vehicles, through backup cameras or other means. The bill passed Congress and was signed into law by President George W. Bush.

In the rule the DOT proposed in 2010 but did not finalize, the agency estimated that 95 to 112 deaths and 7,072 to 8,374 injuries each year would be prevented when implemented.

Congress ordered the rule to be issued by 2011, but after [repeated delays](#), in June 2013, the DOT again postponed the rule until January 2015, stating that it needs more time for study, even though the agency characterizes the research it has already done as "extensive."



2012 Dodge Durango - ParkView back up camera

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA) said Tuesday that it will add rearview video systems to its list of "recommended" features under the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). Safety groups said that was "insufficient," calling for mandatory rearview cameras.

In a statement, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said that "While adding this technology to our list of safety features is

important, I remain committed to implementing the rear visibility rule as well."

According to safety groups, more than 200 people are killed and 18,000 injured in "backover" crashes. Using all three mirrors, drivers cannot see a blind zone several feet behind their vehicles. Forty-four percent of backover fatalities are children under the age of five. An average of 50 kids are injured each week, two fatally, by backover crashes.



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By the DOT's estimates, its delay past the statutory deadline has allowed between 237 and 280 preventable deaths so far – at least half of them children – and thousands of preventable injuries. By the same estimates, another 118 to 140 people will die in preventable backover crashes by the time of the DOT's projected regulation in 2015.

Plaintiffs in the lawsuit include Dr. Greg Gulbransen, Susan Auriemma, Consumers Union of the United States, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, and [Kids and Cars, Inc.](#), represented by Public Citizen. Auriemma backed over her 3-year-old daughter in 2005, injuring her. Gulbransen backed over his 2-year-old son

Cameron in 2002, killing him. The 2008 law is named after him.

Joan Claybrook, former administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and president emeritus of Public Citizen, said that further delays in issuing the safety standard are “unacceptable and unnecessary,” stating further, “I know that there is enough data to take action today.”

“We know there’s a problem, we know there’s a simple solution,” said Janette Fennell, president of Kids and Cars, Inc. “The Transportation Department has a mission, duty and obligation to protect the public, but every day it stalls this rule, Americans unnecessarily remain in danger.”

Rearview camera systems are available on seven in 10 new vehicles, either as standard or optional equipment. A PDF copy of the petition is available [here](#).

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