



**CITY OF ST. LOUIS  
LAW DEPARTMENT**

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John Yoon  
Executive Vice President and General  
Counsel  
Kia America, Inc.  
111 Peters Canyon Rd.  
Irvine, California 92606

Jason Erb  
Chief Legal Officer  
Hyundai Motor North America  
10550 Talbert Ave.  
Fountain Valley, California 92708

**Re: Public Nuisance Caused by Defective Kia and Hyundai Vehicles**

Mr. Yoon and Mr. Erb:

Kia and Hyundai admittedly failed to install engine immobilizers in many of their vehicles, and the respective failures have caused an epidemic of car thefts throughout the nation. In recent months, the City of Saint Louis (the “City”) has experienced a surge in the number of Kia and Hyundai vehicles being stolen. For example, in July, the City averaged 21 Kia and Hyundai vehicle thefts per day, and that rate is only increasing as the days and weeks that Kia and Hyundai both fail and refuse to remedy this public nuisance march on.

The St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (“SLMPD”) received reports of 356 thefts or attempted thefts of Kia or Hyundai vehicles from August 1 through August 13, 2022. This figure represents nearly 77% of the total number of vehicles stolen during the timeframe. SLMPD received more than 1,500 reports of thefts or attempted thefts of Kia or Hyundai vehicles since January. Kia and Hyundai’s failure to install engine immobilizers enables thieves—often juveniles—to steal those vehicles in a matter of seconds, and, because of this failure, the City is on pace to surpass the total number of vehicle thefts for the entire 2021 calendar year by the end of August 2022.

The investigation and documentation of these vehicle thefts and recovery efforts are taxing City resources and forcing SLMPD to devote significant resources to documenting, investigating and recovering these stolen cars. SLMPD’s Anti-Crime Task Force is unduly burdened by this public

nuisance causing compounded investigations of stolen Kia and Hyundai vehicles.

Worse still, stolen Kia and Hyundai vehicles are being used in the commission of violent crime throughout the City. Just this month, a stolen Kia Optima and a stolen Hyundai Sonata were involved in a mid-day shootout near a busy intersection south of downtown, in which a 17-year-old was shot and a bullet entered an occupied apartment. A stolen Hyundai Elantra and stolen Kia Optima were involved in a shooting in which six other vehicles were shot and damaged on June 26, 2022. These incidents are part of a wider pattern of criminals using stolen Kia and Hyundai vehicles for the commission of shootings.

In addition to violent crime, stolen Kia and Hyundai vehicles are involved in all manner of mayhem on City streets, including erratic driving and speeding. SLMPD detectives report that, in the majority of cases, when they stop occupants of stolen Kia and Hyundai vehicles at least one individual is armed. Drivers, often juveniles, at the wheels of stolen Kia and Hyundai vehicles are causing accidents, injuring other drivers, and causing extensive property damage to City and private property.

Kia and Hyundai's defective vehicles have caused a public safety crisis in the City, endangering the health, safety, and peace of all those who live, work or visit the City. Your companies bear the responsibility to mitigate the public nuisance your negligence has created for the City and its residents.

Accordingly, with this letter, the City demands that Kia and Hyundai mitigate the defective conditions providing thieves—including teenagers as young as thirteen—the instrumentalities by which they are destroying property, endangering City drivers and themselves, and, in some cases, committing violent felonies.

If within 30 days, Kia and Hyundai fail to make satisfactory progress to mitigate the public nuisance you have created, I will seek all legal remedies available to the City, including directing the Affirmative Litigation Unit in this Civil Law Department to file suit.

Regards,



Sheena Hamilton  
City Counselor

cc: The Honorable Tishaura O. Jones, Mayor of the City of St. Louis  
Daniel Isom, Director of Public Safety  
Erin McGowan, Associate City Counselor, Affirmative Litigation Unit