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Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.
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[Docket No. 95-30; Notice 1]

Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 1992 Mercedes-Benz 600SL Passenger Cars Are Eligible for Importation

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 1992 Mercedes-Benz 600SL passenger cars are eligible for importation.

SUMMARY: This notice announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that a 1992 Mercedes-Benz 600SL that was not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards is eligible for importation into the United States because (1) It is substantially similar to a vehicle that was originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States and that was certified by its manufacturer as complying with the safety standards, and (2) it is capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

DATES: The closing date for comments on the petition is May 31, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the docket number and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Section, Room 5109, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590. [Docket hours are from 9:30 am to 4 pm]

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: George Entwistle, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202-366-5306).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A) (formerly section 108(c)(3)(A)(i)(I) of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act (the Act)), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. § 30115 (formerly section 114 of the Act), and of the same model year as the

model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the **Federal Register** of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the **Federal Register**.

Northern California Diagnostics Laboratory, Inc. of Napa, California (NCDL) (Registered Importer No. R-92-011) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether 1992 Mercedes-Benz 600SL (Model ID 129.076) passenger cars are eligible for importation into the United States. The vehicle which NCDL believes is substantially similar is the 1992 Mercedes-Benz 500SL. NCDL has submitted information indicating that Daimler Benz A.G., the company that manufactured the 1992 Mercedes-Benz 500SL, certified that vehicle as conforming to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards and offered it for sale in the United States.

The petitioner contends that it carefully compared the 1992 model 600SL to the 1992 model 500SL, and found the two models to be substantially similar with respect to compliance with most applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

NCDL submitted information with its petition intended to demonstrate that the 1992 model 600SL, as originally manufactured, conforms to many Federal motor vehicle safety standards in the same manner as the 1992 model 500SL that was offered for sale in the United States, or is capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that the 1992 model 600SL is identical to the certified 1992 model 500SL with respect to compliance with Standard Nos. 102 *Transmission Shift Lever Sequence * * **, 103 *Defrosting and Defogging Systems*, 104 *Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems*, 105 *Hydraulic Brake Systems*, 106 *Brake Hoses*, 107 *Reflecting Surfaces*, 109 *New Pneumatic Tires*, 113 *Hood Latch Systems*, 114 *Theft Protection*, 116 *Brake Fluid*, 118 *Power Window Systems*, 124 *Accelerator Control Systems*, 201

Occupant Protection in Interior Impact, 202 *Head Restraints*, 204 *Steering Control Rearward Displacement*, 205 *Glazing Materials*, 206 *Door Locks and Door Retention Components*, 207 *Seating Systems*, 208 *Occupant Crash Protection*, 209 *Seat Belt Assemblies*, 210 *Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages*, 211 *Wheel Nuts, Wheel Discs and Hubcaps*, 212 *Windshield Retention*, 216 *Roof Crush Resistance*, 219 *Windshield Zone Intrusion*, 301 *Fuel System Integrity*, and 302 *Flammability of Interior Materials*.

Additionally, the petitioner states that the 1992 Mercedes-Benz 600SL complies with the Bumper Standard found in 49 CFR Part 581.

Petitioner also contends that the vehicle is capable of being readily altered to meet the following standards, in the manner indicated:

Standard No. 101 *Controls and Displays*: (a) Substitution of a lens marked "Brake" for a lens with an ECE symbol on the brake failure indicator lamp; (b) recalibration of the speedometer/odometer from kilometers to miles per hour.

Standard No. 108 *Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment*: (a) Installation of U.S.-model headlamp assemblies which incorporate sealed beam headlamps; (b) installation of front and rear sidemarker/reflector assemblies; (c) installation of U.S.-model taillamp assemblies.

Standard No. 110 *Tire Selection and Rims*: Installation of a tire information placard.

Standard No. 111 *Rearview Mirrors*: Modification of the driver's and passenger's side rear view mirrors.

Standard No. 115 *Vehicle Identification Number*: Installation of a VIN plate that can be read from outside the left windshield pillar, and a VIN reference label on the edge of the door or latch post nearest the driver.

Standard No. 214 *Side Impact Protection*: Installation of reinforcing beams.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the petition described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5109, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated above will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered.