

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1449

To protect the rights of consumers to diagnose, service, maintain, and repair their motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 8, 2011

Mr. TOWNS (for himself and Mr. PLATTS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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## A BILL

To protect the rights of consumers to diagnose, service, maintain, and repair their motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Motor Vehicle Owners  
5       Right to Repair Act of 2011”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7       (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

8               (1) Motor vehicle owners are entitled to choose  
9       which service provider will diagnose, service, main-  
10       tain, or repair their motor vehicles.

1           (2) Promoting competition in price and quality  
2           for the diagnosis of problems, service, maintenance,  
3           and repair of motor vehicles will benefit consumers.

4           (3) Regular diagnosis, service, maintenance,  
5           and repair of motor vehicles, motor vehicle equip-  
6           ment, and motor vehicle systems such as pollution  
7           control, transmission, anti-lock brakes, electronic  
8           and mechanical systems, heating and air-condi-  
9           tioning, and steering are essential to America's mo-  
10          bility, minimizing fuel consumption, protecting the  
11          environment, and enabling the highest levels of safe-  
12          ty possible in modern motor vehicles.

13          (4) Computers of various kinds are now used by  
14          manufacturers in motor vehicle equipment and  
15          motor vehicle systems. On-board computer tech-  
16          nology controls virtually all of the vehicle's systems,  
17          and only service technicians with the necessary tools  
18          and information can access the computers to per-  
19          form diagnosis, service, maintenance, and repair of  
20          the vehicle.

21          (5) Manufacturers have made available to their  
22          authorized dealers and service providers the informa-  
23          tion, tools, codes, and replacement equipment nec-  
24          essary to diagnose problems and to service, main-

1       tain, and repair motor vehicles that incorporate com-  
2       puters in their motor vehicle systems.

3               (6) Consumers in the United States have bene-  
4       fitted from the availability of a wide choice of service  
5       providers for their motor vehicles. The American  
6       economy has also benefitted from the availability of  
7       an aftermarket tools and parts supply that provides  
8       jobs to over 5 million workers in 495,000 businesses,  
9       and generates \$200 billion in annual sales.

10              (7) Vehicles are now being equipped with sys-  
11       tems that permit vehicles to communicate repair and  
12       diagnostic information wirelessly with the vehicle  
13       manufacturer and repair facilities. Car owners have  
14       the right to choose where and to whom information  
15       generated by their vehicle and vehicle computers is  
16       sent.

17       (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

18              (1) to protect motor vehicle owners' right to  
19       choose a service provider for the diagnosis, service,  
20       maintenance, and repair of their motor vehicles;

21              (2) to promote competition in price and quality  
22       among service providers; and

23              (3) to promote safety and fuel efficiency by al-  
24       lowing consumers to choose among competing service  
25       providers.

1 **SEC. 3. MANUFACTURER REQUIREMENTS.**

2 (a) DUTY TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION.—The manu-  
3 facturer of a motor vehicle sold, leased, or otherwise intro-  
4 duced into commerce in the United States must provide  
5 to the motor vehicle owner and service providers, using  
6 reasonable business means and on a non-discriminatory  
7 basis, all information to diagnose, service, maintain, or re-  
8 pair the motor vehicle. This information must include—

9 (1) information about safety alerts, recalls,  
10 service bulletins and the need for adjustments to  
11 maintain vehicle efficiency, safety and convenience;  
12 and

13 (2) all information of any kind provided di-  
14 rectly, indirectly, or wirelessly to new car dealers or  
15 any repair facility to diagnose, service, maintain, re-  
16 pair, activate, certify, or install any motor vehicle  
17 equipment (including replacement parts and equip-  
18 ment) in a motor vehicle.

19 (b) DUTY TO MAKE TOOLS AVAILABLE.—The manu-  
20 facturer of a motor vehicle sold, leased, or otherwise intro-  
21 duced into commerce in the United States must offer for  
22 sale to the motor vehicle owner and to all service providers  
23 on a reasonable and non-discriminatory basis, any tool for  
24 the diagnosis, service, maintenance, or repair of a motor  
25 vehicle, and provide all information that enables after-  
26 market tool companies to manufacture tools with the same

1 functional characteristics as those tools made available by  
2 the manufacturers to authorized dealers.

3 (c) REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT.—The manufacturer  
4 of a motor vehicle sold, leased, or otherwise introduced  
5 into commerce in the United States must offer for sale  
6 to motor vehicle owners, and to all service providers on  
7 reasonable and non-discriminatory terms, all equipment  
8 for diagnosis, service, maintenance, or repair of a motor  
9 vehicle.

10 (d) PROTECTION OF TRADE SECRETS.—

11 (1) A manufacturer may not be required to  
12 publicly disclose information that, if made public,  
13 would divulge methods or processes entitled to pro-  
14 tection as trade secrets.

15 (2) No information may be withheld by a manu-  
16 facturer on the ground that it is a trade secret if  
17 that information is provided (directly or indirectly)  
18 to authorized dealers or service providers.

19 **SEC. 4. AUTHORITY OF FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of enforcing com-  
21 pliance with this Act, the Federal Trade Commission may  
22 utilize all authority conferred on it by the Federal Trade  
23 Commission Act, or otherwise.

24 (b) VIOLATION OF SECTION 3.—A violation of section  
25 3 of this Act constitutes an unfair method of competition

1 and an unfair or deceptive act or practice within the mean-  
2 ing of section 5(a)(1) of the Federal Trade Commission  
3 Act (15 U.S.C. 45(a)(1)).

4 (c) VIOLATION OF A RULE.—Violation of a rule pre-  
5 scribed under section 4(d) of this Act constitutes violation  
6 of a rule defining an unfair or deceptive act or practice  
7 prescribed under section 18(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Trade  
8 Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a(a)(1)(B)).

9 (d) RULEMAKING.—The Federal Trade Commission  
10 may prescribe rules to implement this Act.

11 (e) COOPERATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF TRANS-  
12 PORTATION.—The Federal Trade Commission must co-  
13 operate with the Department of Transportation to publish  
14 technical service bulletins on a Federal Internet Website.

15 (f) LIMITATION.—The Federal Trade Commission  
16 may not prescribe rules that—

17 (1) interfere with the authority of the Adminis-  
18 trator of the Environmental Protection Agency  
19 under section 202(m) of the Clean Air Act (42  
20 U.S.C. 7521(m)) with regard to motor vehicle emis-  
21 sions control diagnostics systems; or

22 (2) conflict with rules prescribed by the Admin-  
23 istrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

1 **SEC. 5. ACTION BY STATES.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Whenever an attorney general of  
3 any State has reason to believe that the interests of the  
4 residents of that State have been or are being threatened  
5 or adversely affected by a violation of section 3 of this  
6 Act, or by the violation of a rule promulgated by the Fed-  
7 eral Trade Commission to implement this Act, the State,  
8 as parents patrial, may bring a civil action on behalf of  
9 its residents to enjoin violations, to obtain damages, res-  
10 titution, or other compensation on behalf of residents of  
11 the State, or to obtain such further relief as the court may  
12 deem appropriate.

13 (b) NOTICE.—The State must serve prior written no-  
14 tice of any civil action under subsection (a) of this section  
15 upon the Federal Trade Commission with a copy of its  
16 complaint, except that if it is not feasible for the State  
17 to provide such prior notice, the State must serve notice  
18 immediately upon instituting an action. Upon receiving a  
19 notice of a civil action, the Federal Trade Commission  
20 may—

- 21 (1) intervene in the action;
- 22 (2) upon intervening, to be heard on all matters  
23 arising therein; and
- 24 (3) to appeal.

25 (c) CONSTRUCTION.—For purposes of bringing any  
26 civil action under subsection (a) of this section, nothing

1 in this chapter will prevent an attorney general from exer-  
2 cising the powers conferred on the attorney general by the  
3 laws of such State to conduct investigations or to admin-  
4 ister oaths or affirmations or to compel the attendance  
5 of witnesses or the production of documentary and other  
6 evidence.

7 (d) ACTIONS BY FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—  
8 Whenever a civil action has been instituted by or the Fed-  
9 eral Trade Commission for violation of any rule prescribed  
10 under section 4(d) of this Act, no State may, during the  
11 pendency of the action instituted by the Federal Trade  
12 Commission, institute a civil action under this Act against  
13 any defendant named in the complaint in such action for  
14 violation of any rule as alleged in such complaint.

15 (e) ACTIONS BY OTHER STATE OFFICIALS.—

16 (1) Nothing contained in this section may pro-  
17 hibit an authorized State official from proceeding in  
18 State court on the basis of an alleged violation of  
19 any civil or criminal statute of such State.

20 (2) In addition to actions brought by an attor-  
21 ney general of a State under subsection (a) of this  
22 section, an action may be brought by officers of a  
23 State who are so authorized.

24 **SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.**

25 In this Act:



1           (1) The term “commerce” has the meaning  
2 given that term in section 4 of the Federal Trade  
3 Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 44).

4           (2) The terms “manufacturer”, “motor vehi-  
5 cle”, and “motor vehicle equipment” have the mean-  
6 ings given those terms in section 30102(a) of title  
7 49, United States Code.

8           (3) The term “motor vehicle owner” and the  
9 term “consumer” mean any person who owns,  
10 leases, or otherwise has the legal right to use and  
11 possess a motor vehicle, or the agent of such person.

12           (4) The term “service provider” means any per-  
13 son engaged in the diagnosis, service, maintenance,  
14 or repair of motor vehicles or motor vehicle engines.

15           (5) The term “replacement equipment” has the  
16 meaning given that term in section 30102(b)(1) of  
17 title 49, United States Code.

18           (6) The term “model year” has the meaning  
19 given that term in section 32901(a) of title 49,  
20 United States Code.

21           (7) The term “dealer” has the meaning given  
22 that term in section 30102(a) of title 49, United  
23 States Code.

24           (8) The term “technical service bulletin” means  
25 a communication sent to a dealer about the diag-

1        nosis, service, maintenance or repair of a motor ve-  
2        hicle or item of motor vehicle equipment and shall  
3        include all communications sent to the Secretary of  
4        Transportation under sections 30166(f) and  
5        30166(m)(3)(A)(ii) of title 49, United States Code.

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