



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
JIMMY PATRONIS
STATE OF FLORIDA

October 17, 2022

Mr. Elon Musk
Chief Executive Officer
Tesla
13101 Harold Green Road
Austin, Texas 78725

Dear CEO Elon Musk:

As you are aware, nearly three weeks ago Hurricane Ian impacted Florida's Southwest coast, inundating the area with salty storm surge waters. The Category 4 hurricane was so massive, storm surge reached 16 feet in certain areas and went as far inland as downtown Fort Myers. From my experience in traveling the state, there were a tremendous amount of Electronic Vehicles (EVs) in this part of Florida, and we now know for a fact that any EV that was submerged in saltwater is a fire risk.

As the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) confirmed last week, *"Test results specific to saltwater submersion show that salt bridges can form within the battery pack and provide a path for short circuit and self-heating. This can lead to fire ignition."* The federal agency also confirmed that, *"Lithium-ion vehicle battery fires have been observed both rapidly igniting and igniting several weeks after battery damage occurred."* Further, I saw with my own eyes as North Collier Fire Rescue fought an EV fire that continuously reignited. It was surreal, and frankly scary, watching fire teams fight this EV fire, using tens-of-thousands of gallons of water to cool the batteries, and then again watching the EV reignite. I even found out later that the car reignited on the tow truck. Florida firefighters have been the tip of the spear in hurricane recovery operations, and more has to be done to help these heroes deal with the unique challenges of EV fires. The fumes from the fires are dangerous, fires reignite, and fire teams don't have a lot of tools at their disposal in dealing with these lithium-ion vehicle battery fires.

The unfortunate reality is that there is a population of vehicles that could spontaneously combust, putting our first responders at risk, and the manufacturers are nowhere to be found. For as big a risk as this is to fire teams, for companies who have received an immense sum of subsidies from taxpayers, I would have hoped the reaction by manufacturers would have been more robust – especially as these EVs supposedly have a tremendous amount of technology and connectivity. There could be a family who evacuated, whose home was left relatively intact from Ian, who may still lose *everything* because of an abandoned EV, left in their garage, that catches fire as a result of salty storm surge waters. That's a risk that requires more of a response from manufacturers than just telling customers to consult the owner's manual.

Many of these families are trying to rebuild their lives following Ian, and manufacturers should really be doing more for families in their time of need. That's just good corporate stewardship.

In this context, we need EV manufacturers to step-up, demonstrate leadership and partner with the State of Florida and local officials in this recovery to ensure that:

1. Outreach to EV owners by manufacturers takes place, alerting customers to the risks of EVs and fires from salty storm surge waters.
2. Identifying and safely relocating compromised EVs to appropriate spaces for monitoring.
3. Having an on-the-ground presence and offering assistance to customers and first responders in mitigating these risks.

Because each and every EV model is different, and because much of this information is not publicly available under the premise of trade secrets, we need more information that is specific to each and every EV model. As such, I am requesting the following information of your company:

1. Has *your* company conducted *any* analysis on the effects of saltwater intrusion on the lithium ion batteries in your vehicles and their risks associated with fires?
2. Over what period of time does a fire risk exist from a vehicle impacted by saltwater, or does the risk exist indefinitely? While NHTSA confirmed to our office that "fire ignition" can occur "several weeks" after exposure to saltwater, firefighters and other first responders need greater specificity to accurately assess, plan, and act on these risks.
3. Can you provide to the state information on the location of these EVs in the runup to impacts from Ian?
4. Can you provide a point of contact for your company that can be shared with emergency officials?
5. Are there any fire risks associated with chargers that were submerged in storm surge?
6. Do you have the ability to assess whether an EV, impacted by storm surge, is operational and currently being used?
7. To your knowledge, is there *any* fire suppression technology that has great success in ensuring fires do not reignite?
8. As much of the Central portion of Florida was flooded by heavy rains, is there *any* associated risks with submersion in freshwater?
9. Will you forego any attempts to limit information, under the premise of proprietary secrets, and agree to make the provided information to above questions publicly available as to facilitate greater coordination amongst industry experts as we work in real time to mitigate risks?

Please provide answers to my office for public distribution no later than October 24th. Again, the recovery in Southwest Florida is still ongoing. There are still families who have not gotten to their homes and families who are sifting through their belongings, making hard decisions. While this information is critical to mitigating further suffering, we really need to see more action by your company on a product that no one knows more about better than your engineers and your experts.

CEO Elon Musk
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I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jimmy Patronis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jimmy Patronis
Chief Financial Officer