



MIKE HUNTER
ATTORNEY GENERAL

September 15, 2017

Mr. Steve Burrage
Chairman
Oklahoma Tax Commission
2501 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73194

Dear Mr. Burrage:

As the Gulf Coast continues to recover and fully assess the billions of dollars in damage after the devastation left by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, I am writing to ask your assistance in keeping Oklahomans safe from potential harm.

Early estimates say up to one million vehicles have been damaged by flood waters.

As you know, and as we have seen in the past after major disasters, individuals looking to defraud others will take the flooded vehicles and do everything they can to enter them into the used car market, knowingly deceiving the innocent purchaser.

I am asking for assistance from you, your staff and statewide motor license agents to be suspicious and vigilant in the transfer of vehicle titles from Texas and surrounding states regarding flood damaged vehicles.

Please remind everyone that the statutory criteria for flood damaged vehicles is set forth in 47 OS § 1105(A)(3), as follows:

"Flood damaged vehicle" means a salvage or rebuilt vehicle which was damaged by flooding or a vehicle which was submerged at a level to or above the dashboard of the vehicle and on which an amount of loss was paid by the insurer.

In addition, the owner of a vehicle entering Oklahoma from another state must complete a flood damage disclosure as part of the title application process. This afternoon my office is sending notice to the public urging caution when purchasing a used vehicle. It offers the following recommendations and information, you are free to pass along.

Recommendations when purchasing a used car

- Always have a certified, independent mechanic inspect the car prior to purchase;
- Get an independent report on the car, be cautious of reports the seller already has;
- Check the Vehicle Information Number (VIN) with the National Insurance Crime Bureau, here: https://www.nicb.org/theft_and_fraud_awareness/vincheck;
- Purchase from a reputable seller.

Signs of a flood damaged car:

- Rust or corrosion under the hood on engine components and wiring;
- Water in oil or transmission, check this by pulling the measuring sticks;
- Water lines in the trunk, or in the wheel well;
- Mud buildup in unusual places, like under the dashboard;
- Mismatched upholstery and carpet combinations;
- Rust on unpainted parts like bolts or door hinges;
- Musty odors;
- Be suspicious of any car being sold with a lost title.

In addition, we are urging Oklahomans to report flood cars being sold in Oklahoma to the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit at (405) 521-2029, or via email at consumerprotection@oag.ok.gov.

The historical damage caused by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma are yet to fully be realized. Our friends and neighbors to the south need our support, thoughts and prayers. However, it is just as important to protect Oklahomans from the unfortunate fraud that always follows these disasters.

Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mike Hunter