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Why the auto aftermarket must be protected

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Re: MP's Bill Aims To Protect Automotive Aftermarket, April 14.

The notion that a "lack of training, technology, experience and infrastructure in the aftermarket sector ... make the bill impractical" is a breathtakingly circular argument. The automakers are denying software, tools and training, while using that very absence of tools as the reason for further denial of these tools -- all while the consumer suffers.

Next, automakers say consumers have a closer relationship with their dealers than with service providers. Yet, consumer satisfaction surveys over the past 20 years consistently rate aftermarket service and repair facilities as more trustworthy and convenient than the dealer network.

Michael Hatch of the Canadian Automobile Dealers Association believes automakers and dealers should be able to decide voluntarily what information to make available. But the automakers are producing information to fix something that consumers already own. Much like home computer software updates, car companies produce re-calibration software for a vehicle's computer to fix something. Why should companies have the right to hold consumers for ransom unless they are going to offer these fixes for free?

There is a reason that numerous consumer groups, such as the Canadian Automobile Association, Pollution Probe and the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, all endorse Bill C-273: It enshrines a fair and accessible licensing practice that is the standard for consumers in any other industry.

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