The rise in vehicle theft in Canada is concerning and automotive manufacturers take the issue very seriously. Despite stronger regulatory requirements for theft deterrence for Canadian vehicles and the fitment of the same technologies in new vehicles sold in the Canada and U.S. markets, vehicle theft rates were growing faster than in the United States. However, as resources have been deployed to strengthen enforcement at the border and on the ground, theft rates in Canada have fallen. This demonstrates that the most effective way to continue to deter vehicle theft is to target organised crime groups and stem the export of stolen vehicles to foreign markets.

What Auto Manufacturers are doing to protect vehicles from theft:

CVMA member companies have designed their vehicles with systems to deter theft and continually work to improve security features of new vehicles. The integrated engine immobilizer feature, which has been mandatory since 2007 in Canada, is an important deterrent that protects drivers and reduces theft. Engine immobilizers prevent a vehicle's engine from starting if an unauthorized ignition key fob is used.

Maintaining vehicle system security depends on confidentiality of information. While not all measures in place can be advertised, examples of activities manufacturers have taken include passive and active systems to deter or impede theft activities, surveillance features, software updates to stay ahead of thieves, and stolen vehicle services to assist owners.

CVMA members continually modernize and improve anti-theft measures to strengthen vehicle security for their customers. With the vehicle security landscape constantly evolving, manufacturers closely monitor threats to inform strategies for enhancing security and work collaboratively with regulators, law enforcement, and insurance companies to understand how organized crime groups are tampering with and transporting stolen vehicles and to assist in investigations and recovery.

Eliminating the flow of stolen vehicles:

The main driver of increased rates of vehicle theft in Canada is weaker vehicle export control measures compared to the United States. This allows criminals to take advantage of the Canadian export market to sell stolen vehicles because of minimal risk of detection and the potential for high profits, which may be used to support other criminal activities.¹

We recommend the following actions to target organised crime groups and to deter theft effectively:

1.

Funding for law enforcement: Law enforcement agencies require more resources to tackle vehicle theft. A dedicated auto theft reporting mechanism for the public would facilitate coordinated and expedited enforcement action. Expanded authorities for local law enforcement to access intermodal facilities based on stolen vehicle intelligence would also help stem the movement of stolen vehicles domestically.

2.

Criminal code changes: The profits generated through auto theft grossly outweigh risk of capture, prosecution, and sentencing for organized criminals. The Criminal Code should be strengthened to ensure there are real consequences for vehicle thieves.

3.

Resources for Canada's Border Services Agency (CBSA): Investments into personnel, container imaging machines, and remote VIN verification technologies would help stem the flow of stolen vehicle exports. The practices and equipment employed by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection should be replicated in Canada, including enhanced reporting requirements for containers prior to export.

4.

Policy coordination: Auto manufacturers are being asked to increase vehicle security while simultaneously being regulated by "right to repair" legislation requiring open access to the data stored and transmitted by vehicles beyond what is needed for repair. This works directly against the efforts of auto manufacturers to keep vehicle systems secure.

The industry is committed to working with stakeholders, including federal, provincial, and municipal governments, insurance, and law enforcement, to understand challenges and find solutions to deter vehicle theft.