

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY**

MICHAEL L. RAFFO, on behalf of himself  
and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

VOLKSWAGEN GROUP OF AMERICA,  
INC. and VOLKSWAGEN AG, a German  
corporation,

Defendants.

Civil Action No.

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

**JURY TRIAL DEMANDED**

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

Plaintiff Michael L. Raffo alleges for his class action complaint the following through his attorneys Squitieri & Fearon, LLP, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated based on personal knowledge as to his own vehicle and upon information and belief as to all other matters.

**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

1. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and on behalf of all similarly situated persons (“Class Members”) in the United States who purchased or leased any Volkswagen vehicle models identified herein whose telematics equipment was rendered wholly or partially inoperable when the major wireless carriers phased at “3G beginning” in early 2022 (“Class Vehicles”). The Class Vehicles’ internet enabled features such as roadside emergency safety features were rendered inoperable after the 3G phase out in 2022 due to defendants’ use of obsolete telematics equipment they installed in the Class Vehicles. The Defendants are Volkswagen Group of America, Inc., (“VWGoA”) , and Volkswagen AG (“VWAG”) (collectively “VW” or “Defendants”). The allegations herein are based on personal knowledge as to Plaintiff’s own experiences and are made as to other matters based on an investigation by counsel, including analysis of publicly available information.

2. This action was commenced to obtain recompense for Class Vehicles whose telematics were rendered inoperable when 3G as phased out, or repair, retrofit or replacement of 3G telematics.

### **PARTIES**

3. Plaintiff Michael L. Raffo (“Plaintiff”) is a resident of the State of New York who purchased a 2015 Volkswagen GTI.

4. Defendant VWGoA is an entity incorporated in New Jersey. VWAG selected New Jersey for the original site of VWGoA’s headquarters and chose to have VWGoA incorporated as a New Jersey entity. According to its website VWGoA “houses the U.S. operations” of a worldwide family of brands including Volkswagen, Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, and Lamborghini brands, as well as the activities of its 6,000 employees and its subsidiary, VW Credit, Inc. Defendant designed, manufactured distributed, marketed, and sold the Class Vehicles, through its extensive network of authorized dealerships in the United States.

5. Defendants, through various entities, market, distribute, warrants, and sells Volkswagen and Audi-branded automobiles and parts for those automobiles, including the Class Vehicles, in multiple locations across the United States, including New Jersey and New York.

6. VWGoA, under the supervision of defendant, Volkswagen AG, also developed and disseminated the owner’s manual and warranty booklets, advertisements, and other promotional materials relating to the Class Vehicles.

7. Defendant Volkswagen AG (“VWAG”) is an entity incorporated in and registered to do business in Germany with its principal place of business at Berliner Ring 2, 38440, Wolfsburg, Germany. VWAG designs, engineers, manufactures, tests, markets, supplies, sells

and distributes Volkswagen, Skoda, and Audi-branded vehicles and parts for those vehicles worldwide, including the in the United States.

8. VWAG is the parent corporation of VWGoA. VWAG is also the parent corporation of the United States manufacturing facilities for Volkswagen and Audi-branded vehicles. For all its United States subsidiaries, including VWGoA, VWAG and/or Audi AG provide all the equipment and information for the purpose of manufacturing, servicing, and repairing the Class Vehicles. Each year since 2016, VWAG has reported over 35 billion euros (or over 41 billion in U.S. dollars) of revenue from its North American activities via VWGoA and its network of authorized dealerships.

9. The relationship between VWAG and VWGoA is governed by a General Distributor Agreement that gives VWAG the right to control nearly every aspect of VWGoA's operations related to Volkswagen vehicles—including sales, marketing, management policies, information and governance polices, pricing, and warranty terms.

### **JURISDICTION**

10. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1332(d) and 1453, because (1) this action is a "class action," which contains class allegations and expressly seeks certification of a proposed class of individuals; (2) the putative Class consists of more than one hundred proposed class members; (3) the citizenship of at least one class member is different from Defendants' citizenship (New Jersey and Germany);<sup>1</sup> and (4) the aggregate amount in

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<sup>1</sup> Because jurisdiction is based on the Class Action Fairness Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d), even though Defendants are limited liability companies, each Defendant is a citizen of the states "where it has its principal place of business and ... under whose laws it is organized." 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d). That is, the rules applicable in traditional non-class diversity cases, under which the citizenship of limited liability companies would be determined by the citizenship of those companies' members, do **not** apply to this case. *Erie Ins. Exch. v. Erie Indemn. Co.*, 722 F.3d 154, 161 n.7 (3d Cir. 2013) (explaining that the Class Action Fairness Act "evinces an intent that suits by unincorporated associations be treated like suits by corporations in that the citizenship of the association for diversity purposes is determined by the entity's principal place of business and not by the citizenship of its members").

controversy by the claims of Plaintiff and the putative Class exceeds \$5,000,000, exclusive of interest and costs.

11. Venue is proper in this jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because Defendants are subject to personal jurisdiction in this District, and the actions of the Defendants' that give rise to the claims against them in this action took place in part at least in this District.

**CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

12. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates the allegations contained in the paragraphs above.

13. Plaintiff brings this action pursuant to Rule 23(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, on behalf of himself and a Class consisting of:

All persons who purchased or leased, anywhere in the United States, a Volkswagen model (collectively the “Class Vehicles”) as follows:

Volkswagen

2014-2019	Passat, Jetta, Tiguan, Beetle
2014-2017	EOS
2018-2019	Atlas
2018-2019	Arteon
2014-2019	GolfR, GolfD; Golf;eGolf
2014-2019	GTI
2014-2019	Golf SportWagen
2014-2018	CC

14. Plaintiff reserves the right to amend the definition of the Class.

15. This action is properly maintainable as a class action.

16. There could be over one million members of the Class based upon Volkswagen’s own public sales figures of vehicles sold with 3G telematics. Accordingly, joinder of all members is impractical.

17. Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Class and predominate over any questions solely affecting individual members of the Class. Among questions of law and fact in common to the Class are:

- a. Whether Defendants misrepresented the 3G Only Limitations features of Cars;
- b. The extent of the features which are inoperative when 3G is phased out;
- c. Whether Defendants in their marketing and sale of the Cars violated the NJCFA, N.J.S.A. §56:8-2, *et seq.* New York General Business Law Section 349 and similar laws of other states in which the vehicles were sold;
- d. Whether Defendants breached express and/or implied warranties when it delivered Cars with telematics systems with the 3G Only Limitations;
- e. The extent of damages/diminution in value/overcharges resulting from the 3G Only Limited Telematics in the Cars.

18. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of each member of each of the Class in that Plaintiff alleges a common course of conduct by Defendants toward each member of the Class. Specifically, Defendants violated the NJCFA, NYGBL and similar laws of other states and breached its warranties with each member of the Class. Plaintiff and the other members of the Class seek identical remedies under identical legal theories. There is no antagonism or material factual variation between Plaintiff' claims and those of the Class.

19. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the members of the Class and has retained counsel who have extensive experience prosecuting class actions and who, with Plaintiff, is fully capable of, and intent upon, vigorously pursuing this action. Plaintiff has no interest adverse to the Classes.

20. A class action is superior to all other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy. Furthermore, the damage that has been suffered by any individual Class member is likely not enough to sustain the expense and burden of individual litigation. Hence it would be impracticable for all members of the Class to redress the wrongs done to them individually. There will be no difficulty in the management of this action as a class action.

21. The prosecution of separate actions against Defendants would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to the individual Class members, which could establish incompatible standards of conduct for Defendants. In addition, adjudications with respect to individual members of the Classes could, as a practical matter, be dispositive of the interests of the other members of the Classes not parties to such adjudications, or could substantially impede or impair their ability to protect their interests.

22. The members of the Class are readily identifiable through Defendants' records.

23. Defendants have acted on grounds generally applicable to the Classes with respect to the matters complained of herein, thereby making appropriate the relief sought herein with respect to the Classes as a whole.

### **SUBSTANTIVE ALLEGATIONS**

24. Consumer Reports succinctly described the situation:

“As wireless carriers shut down their 3G networks over the coming months, millions of cars are losing the ability to automatically contact first responders after a crash...

Automatic crash notification, which alerts first responders via a built-in cellular connection, often relies on aging 3G cellular networks to connect drivers with emergency services and share a vehicle's location. Even though automakers have been aware that these networks are shutting down permanently between February and July, many manufacturers still relied on it until as recently as the 2021 model year.

“Shutting down the 3G network to prioritize newer technologies is positive in the long run,” says Alex Knizek, an automotive engineer at CR. “But it is disappointing that some automakers have failed to offer a solution to owners of 3G-connected vehicles, leaving them unable to take advantage of proven and valuable safety features, as well as other beneficial connectivity functions.”

The reason is cost savings, according to Roger Lanctot, director of automotive connected mobility at Strategy Analytics, a consulting firm. “It’s the last chapter of the automakers adopting the least-expensive connectivity module they can find,” he says. Only recently did automakers start future-proofing newer models. “It’s a challenge for the industry, but going forward, automakers recognize that they need to put the latest connectivity in.”

In addition to crash notification, many vehicles also have an SOS button to contact emergency services, and a lot of those buttons still use a 3G network. It’s usually red and located near the vehicle’s dome light or rearview mirror. Some cars may also use 3G connectivity for convenience features such as remote unlocking, remote start, emergency roadside assistance, navigation map updates, and vehicle diagnostics. These and other features will no longer work without an upgrade to newer 4G or 5G technology. But because of the way many of these vehicles are designed, it can be difficult or even impossible to upgrade the technology to work with the newer networks, Lanctot says.

“What a mess,” says William Wallace, CR’s manager of safety policy. “Wireless carriers, federal regulators, and some automakers seem content to leave people out to dry, even if it means they lose access to a potentially lifesaving technology. Every automaker should deliver to its customers the services they’ve been promised—without charging them extra—and lawmakers should get ahead of the game to keep this from ever happening again in the future.”

25. Historically, sometime around 2009, As the public became increasingly aware of the capabilities and benefit of telematics, car buyers began to demand the connectivity feature from car makers. The benefits are tangible and can be valued and include, *inter alia*, reduced insurance premiums and vehicle diagnosing capabilities which reduce service costs, and fuel

expenses. *See* <https://www.incartelematics.com/faq-items/what-cars-have-telematics> (March 2021) last accessed August 27, 2022.

26. Volkswagen cars have been sold in the USA since at least the 50s. In or about 2014 Volkswagen began offering its “Car-Net” connected car services. The Car-Net is based on Volkswagen’s 3G-only telematic system. According to published reports, Volkswagen’s 2014-2019 model years are affected.

27. The Car-Net features depend on the equipment and technology of the telematics systems, not contracts with service providers.

28. When 3G became available, Volkswagen installed 3G capable telematics in its vehicles but refused and failed to have the 3G telematics adaptable to the next “generation” of wireless. In the field of mobile connections, a “generation” generally refers to a change in the fundamental nature of the service, non-backwards compatible transmission technology, higher peak bit rates, new frequency bands. Cellular connectivity has characteristic of technology, speed, frequency and spectral capabilities which are constantly being improved upon.

29. All manufacturers of 3G devices have long known that 3G was “spectrally inefficient” and would be phased out as early as possible. In January 2008, the FCC auction for 700 MHZ spectrum began with Verizon Wireless and AT&T winning the biggest share after having stated their intentions to support LTE a/k/a 4G LTE.

30. As early as August 2009, carriers supporting 3G began planning their upgrade to 4G LTE. On December 14, 2009 Telia Sonera became the first carrier to offer customers 4G services. *See* “First in the World with 4G Services,” Telia Sonera Press Release December 14, 2009. Accordingly, Defendants knew of the imminent obsolescence of 3G and that industry standards were rapidly advancing.



31. The Class Vehicles were factory equipped with 3G only telematics devices but by 2014 3G was already being replaced by 4G LTE.

32. There was no disclosure or even suggestion that Car-Net would be rendered obsolete once 3G was phased out or that the Car-Net features were only temporary or had only a limited life. As to the later model years after 4G became prevalent, Defendants never disclosed that its equipment was one generation behind the standard! To the contrary, Defendant marketed the features as a permanent features of the Class Vehicles.

### **The Warranties Provided by VW Volkswagen Vehicles**

33. Volkswagen provide warranties directly to Plaintiff and other purchases of Class Vehicles. Volkswagen's New Vehicle Limited Warranty covers "defects in manufacturer's material and workmanship," and is limited to "4 years or 50,000 miles from your vehicle's in-service date, which occurs first."

34. The warranty booklets provided to Plaintiff and consumers by VWGoA are done so with the explicit permission and direction of Volkswagen of North America.

35. Unlike many car companies, VW does not make it owners' manuals and warranty booklets available online prior to purchase. In order to access such materials on VW's websites, a consumer needs a Vehicle Identification Number. As such, the full warranty terms are presented to Plaintiff and consumers after the purchase, on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.

36. Volkswagen and knew of imminent new generations of wireless technology and could have manufactured telematics adaptable to the next generation:

(a) Defendant Volkswagen is part of 5G AA Automatic Association ("5G AA") a "registered voluntary association" founded in September 2016 with Audi AG, Daimler AG and five major 5G patent holders. "5G AA was created to connect the telecom industry to

vehicle manufacturers to develop end-to-end solutions for future mobility and transportation services.” Christopher Voight Chairman of the 5G AA Board. *See* <https://5gaa.org> last accessed August 27, 2022.

(b) 5G AA promoted CV2X which, as designed, early on provided a migration path to the anticipated 5G based systems and services. *See* <https://enom.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vehicle-to-everything> last accessed August 27, 2022.

(c) As a result of Volkswagen’s membership in of 5G AA it was very aware of 3G’s almost automatic obsolescence as soon as it was introduced.

37. Defendants could have but chose not to design build or install telematics with downloadable software or physical spare parts which could allow the devices to continue to connect to wireless “generations” following 3G. Defendants had the capability to retrofit its 3G telematics and did so once 3G became the prevalent technology, but refused to design the 3G telematics to be retrofitted.

38. The 3G phase out does not necessarily automatically disable all devices working on that protocol as it has in the Cars. For example, the iPhone 3GS can connect to Wi-Fi to access internet applications even after the 3G phase out. *See* [https://www.zdnet.com/google-amp/home-and-office/\\_/3g-is-shutting-down-here-are-the-gadgets-that-still-rely-on-it-do-you-have-one/](https://www.zdnet.com/google-amp/home-and-office/_/3g-is-shutting-down-here-are-the-gadgets-that-still-rely-on-it-do-you-have-one/) ZDNET, June Wan, April 8, 2022. Last accessed August 27, 2022. Software upgrades have been developed to extend the connectivity life of 3G driven devices. *Id.* Google’s Pixel 2 was released in October 2017 with hardware/software that could support 4G LTE and had been pre-armed as early as March 2017. In addition, AT&T connected iPhone 6 and Galaxy S4 Mini and later Samsung Galaxy models and Pixel 2 Goggle models will all continue to work after the 3G phase out as will older phones from Motorola and LG. While Audi continue to

install, promote and sell the 3G only devices, though the end of the Class Period, the major cellular providers have been preparing for years and hence most mobile/smartphone customers are on the 4G and/or 5G network. See <https://www.verify-this.com/article/mews/verify/technology-verify/you-will-have-to-upgrade-replace-phone-to4g-5g-in-2022-if-you-have-3g-Verizon-att-T-Mobile-all-phasing-out-3g/635-e733678c-clcd-485d-9793-7f97c003bcb9> last accessed August 28, 2022.

39. Even after designing and installing the 3G Only Telematics, a technology “fix” for the 3G phase out was not impossible, or even difficult. It would have been costly however, but Defendants could have done it, or planned in advance by recalling cars and installing upgrades to add 4G and/or 5G capabilities.

40. Defendants also could have integrated a swappable SIM card into its telematics module which could have allowed the system to upgrade itself to 4G LTD or 5G, but they did not do that.

41. Defendants did not design, build or install the “Devices” to be able to transition to successors to 3G due to a desire to save on manufacturing costs. *Id.* quoting Ruger Lanfot, Director of Automotive Connected Mobility at Strategy Analytics.

42. By contrast, General Motors, whose 2015 and later models of Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac all had the proprietary “OnStar” hardware which was also affected adversely by the 3G sunseting, announced to its customers:

In 2021, OnStar began working with AT&T on network updates and started executing over-the-air software updates to ensure Members were not impacted by the network transition.

GM committed to automatically send “over-the-air” software updates free of charge to address the 3G phase-out.

43. Moreover, the obsolescence issue was entirely foreseeable. Jeremy Barnes, a spokesperson for Mitsubishi, was quoted in Consumer Reports about the 3G phase out:

“We foresaw this time coming and designed around it”

**SUNSETTING OF 3G AND LOSS OF  
AUDI CONNECT FEATURES IN THE CARS**

44. In February 2019, AT&T announced a plan to “sunset” its 3G network. *See* <http://www.business.ATT.com/explore/make-the-switch.html> last accessed August 27, 2022. 3G “sunsetting” means that a mobile network operator (or carriers) shuts off the cellular infrastructure required to operate devices based on 3G technology. Other carriers soon followed with their own announcements of phase-outs.

45. Notwithstanding that announcement, Defendants sold hundreds of thousands of 3G Only Telematics equipped vehicles.

46. Volkswagen’s inoperable features include loss of the “SOS and emergency call feature, online roadside call assistance, stolen vehicle locator, information assistance, automatic crash notification”; “remote lock and unlock” vehicle health reports; “fuel status”; “send POI”; “boundary alerts”; “speed alerts”; and the vehicle can “no longer transmit or receiver data.”

47. Volkswagen’s solution is to offer owners of the affected vehicles a “special price” of \$295 for “Motion by Mojio” which requires the buyer to pay additional subscription fees.

**DEFENDANTS’ CONCEALMENT AND  
OMISSIONS CAUSED LOSS AND DAMAGE TO CAR BUYERS**

48. Had the Defendants truthfully disclosed and reported that its telematics for the Class Vehicles were 3G only, consumers would have been less likely to purchase the cars, would have abstained outright or sought substantial discounts and/or upgrades. As a proximate cause of

Defendants' misrepresentations and warrant breaches detailed in this complaint, Plaintiff and class members purchased Class Vehicles.

49. Plaintiff and the class members who purchased Class Vehicles did not get the benefit of the bargain they struck. Instead, they received cars whose telematics had planned obsolescence and were therefore of lesser value because the telematics was destined for obsolescence as soon as the models were issued. The cars that Plaintiff and the class members paid for and bargained to receive, while marketed as products with telematics, were of lesser value than as advertised. Accordingly, purchasers of the Cars, including Plaintiff and class members, have suffered and will continue to suffer injury, ascertainable losses of money or property, and monetary and non-monetary damages, including from not receiving the benefit of their bargain in purchasing the Cars.

50. The Defendants' misrepresentations and other conduct in failing to truthfully disclose to prospective buyers that the cars were 3G Only caused Plaintiff and class members substantial injury in the form of price premiums and overpayments for products and diminished resale value and loss of telematics benefits described herein.

### **TOLLING**

51. **Tolling of the Limitations Period** The Defendants had actual knowledge for several years that the marketing and advertising of its Cars was deceptive and misleading.

52. **Continuing Act Tolling** Beginning in or around 2014, Defendants continuously marketed and sold the Cars to unsuspecting car buyers. The Defendants continuously represented these vehicles could adapt to technology. By continuously repeating these false representations and failing to disclose that the Cars were 3G only the Defendants engaged in a

continuing wrong sufficient to render inapplicable any statute of limitations that Audi might seek to apply.

53. At all relevant times, the Defendants knew that they were concealing and misrepresenting material facts, but continued to misrepresent and conceal information in its marketing and sales materials. Plaintiff and class members' claims are not time barred.

54. **Fraudulent Concealment Tolling** State consumer protection laws, together with the doctrine of equitable tolling and/or the discovery rule, toll the applicable statutes of limitations for all class members because of Defendants' conduct, including but not limited to concealment and omission of material facts.

55. This duty to disclose arose, among other things, due to the Defendants' control over manufacturing, marketing and representations about the cars.

56. The Defendants knew about the 3G Only Limitations of the cars ever since they started selling the Cars.

57. Despite their knowledge, the Defendants actively concealed this material information from the Plaintiff and other class members.

58. The Defendants actively concealed the information to continue to profit from their sale and prevent Plaintiff and other class members from bringing suit or otherwise seeking redress.

59. Plaintiff and class members justifiably relied on the Defendants to disclose the true nature of the Cars they purchased, because the truth was not discoverable by Plaintiff and the other class members through reasonable efforts. Any applicable statute of limitations has been tolled by the Defendants' knowledge, active concealment, and denial of the facts alleged herein, which behavior is ongoing.

60. Defendants are estopped from asserting that statutes of limitations were running for the duration of time Class Members were unaware of Defendants' misrepresentations.

61. Defendants are equitably estopped from asserting the statutes of limitations ran against the claims of class members.

62. Additional information supporting allegations of misrepresentations is in the control of the Defendants.

63. Material information concealed and/or actively suppressed by the Defendants includes but is not limited to the 3G Only Limitations, described in the preceding paragraphs.

64. Defendants had a duty to disclose to Class members the 3G Only Limitations.

65. Defendants breached express and implied warranties and actively and affirmatively misrepresented, concealed and suppressed, both pre-sale and post-sale, the existence of the 3G Only Limitation.

#### **UNCONSCIONABILITY OF DEFENDANTS' CONDUCT**

66. The warranties accompanying Cars were procedurally and substantively unconscionable under Uniform Commercial Code § 2-302 and other applicable state warranty laws because of the disparity in bargaining power of the parties and the purchasers' lack of knowledge that Cars had 3G only limitations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> New Jersey Uniform Commercial Code § 2-302 (NJ Stat. Ann. § 12A:2-302) states in pertinent part:

- (1) If the court as a matter of law finds the contract or any clause of the contract to have been unconscionable at the time it was made the court may refuse to enforce the contract, or it may enforce the remainder of the contract without the unconscionable clause, or it may so limit the application of any unconscionable clause as to avoid any unconscionable result.
- (2) When it is claimed or appears to the court that the contract or any clause thereof may be unconscionable the parties shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to present evidence as to its commercial

67. The contractual terms were unreasonably favorable to the Defendants since the Defendants were fully aware of the 3G only limitations but proposed class representative and class members were unaware. Thus that information imbalance rendered the bargaining position of the Defendants for the sale of Cars grossly disproportionate and vastly superior to that of individual vehicle purchasers, including the proposed class representative and class members.

68. The Defendants' conduct renders the Cars purchase contract so one-sided as to be unconscionable under the circumstances existing at the formation of the vehicle purchase contract.

69. The durational limitation of the warranties accompanying the Cars is unreasonable and unconscionable since the Defendants actively concealed the 3G only limitations. The proposed class representatives and class members had no notice of or ability to detect the issue.

70. Defendants engaged in unconscionable commercial practices.

71. Defendants' unconscionable conduct precludes any exclusion of incidental and consequential damages or any other limitation of remedies. The Defendants' upper-level management orchestrated this wrongful conduct.

72. The proposed class representative and class members operated and maintained their Cars in conformity with the respective owner's manual and Service and Warranty requirements.

73. The Defendants violated the consumer protection laws of New Jersey together with all other state consumer protection laws with their unconscionable conduct described in

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setting, purpose and effect to aid the court in making the determination.



this complaint including but not limited to their failure to disclose material information that caused ascertainable financial harm to the proposed class representative and class members.

74. Car owners have sustained an ascertainable financial loss. Individuals who own or have owned Cars also sustained diminution of the resale value of their Cars.

75. The proposed class representative and class members have not received the benefit of their bargain concerning their respective purchase of Cars.

76. If the proposed class representative and class members had been made aware of the 3G Only limitations in their respective Cars and the attendant ramifications of value, safety and care, they would not have purchased the Cars or would have paid less for their vehicles.

77. As a direct result of these knowing misrepresentations and omissions, the proposed class representative and class members purchased Cars and sustained economic harm since they purchased vehicles worth considerably less than represented. These misrepresentations diminish the value and increased cost of vehicle ownership.

78. The wrongful conduct of the Defendants in violation of the consumer protection laws of New Jersey together with all other similar state consumer protection laws occurred within the limitations period set out in the respective statutes and/or the limitations period as tolled by the Defendants' conduct.

#### **THE INJURIES SUFFERED BY PLAINTIFF AND OTHER CLASS MEMBERS**

79. Plaintiff and all purchasers and lessees of the Cars (who, as detailed below are the members of the putative Classes) have suffered injury and been damaged by Defendants' unconscionable practices and breaches of its warranties. Specifically, Plaintiff and all members of the putative Class paid for a Car that was represented and warranted to be operable for as long

as the car was operable but the cars they received had 3G Only Limitations which eventually rendered the features inoperable.

80. Plaintiff and all members of the putative Classes received vehicles that were substantially less valuable than the vehicles that Defendants represented and warranted to them, due to the failure of Defendants to deliver a specific, bargained-for characteristic.

### **COUNT I**

#### **Violations of New Jersey's Consumer Fraud Act, N.J.S.A. § 56:8-2, *et seq.* (On Behalf of the Nationwide Class or Subclasses of State Buyers)**

81. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

82. Plaintiff brings this claim against Defendants on behalf of himself and the Class.

83. Defendants have engaged in deceptive, unfair, fraudulent and/or misleading commercial practices in the advertising, promotion, marketing, distribution, selling and leasing of Cars.

84. Defendants represented that Cars had characteristics, uses, benefits, or qualities that they did not have.

85. In its advertising, promotion, and marketing of the Cars, Defendants misrepresented material facts to Plaintiff and other members of the Class with respect to the vehicles' qualities. As detailed above, Defendants deceptive advertising, promotion, and marketing of the Cars emanated from New Jersey.

86. Defendants' conduct was objectively deceptive and had the capacity to deceive reasonable consumers under the circumstances. The fact that the cars' telematics were 3G only was a material fact to which a reasonable consumer would attach importance at the time of purchase or lease.

87. Defendants' practices, as detailed herein, violated the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act, N.J.S.A. 56:8-1, et seq.

88. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' violations of the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act, Plaintiff and other members of the Class have suffered ascertainable losses, which include but are not limited to, the diminished value of their vehicles and the failure to receive the benefit of the bargain promised to them by Defendants (i.e., the vehicles they received were less valuable at the time of purchase or lease than the vehicles Defendants promised to them); and the substantial out-of-pocket costs which will be required to make Audi Connect operable. Accordingly, Plaintiff and other members of the Class were harmed by, and Defendants are liable for, Defendants' actions in violation of the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act.

89. Defendants are liable to Plaintiff and the members of the Class for treble damages caused by their deceptive conduct, and for reasonable attorneys' fees as set forth in the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act.

## COUNT II

### **Violation Of The New York General Business Law § 349(A) Against Defendants**

90. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth above.

91. The elements of a cause of action under NYGBL 349(a) is that: (1) the challenged transactions were "consumer-oriented"; (2) Defendants engaged in deceptive or materially misleading acts or practices; and (3) Plaintiffs was injured by reason of Defendants' deceptive or misleading conduct.

92. Defendants practices are deceptive and materially misleading.

93. Considering the greater knowledge and experience of Defendants in relation to Plaintiff and the members of the Class as to the telematics, the allocation of the risks between the parties, and similar public policy concerns, these practices are deceptive and therefore, violate the GBL.

94. As a result of the foregoing Defendants are in violation of NY GBL § 349 and Plaintiff and Class members have been injured thereby.

### **COUNT III**

#### **Breach of Express Warranty by Description in Violation of N.J. Stat. § 12A:2-313(b) (On Behalf of the Nationwide Class Or Alternatively State Subclasses)**

95. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

96. Plaintiff brings this claim against Defendants on behalf of themselves and the Nationwide Class pursuant to Section 2-313(b) of the Uniform Commercial Code, adopted under New Jersey law pursuant to N.J. Stat. § 12A:2-313(b). That section provides: "Any description of the goods which is made part of the basis of the bargain creates an express warranty that the goods shall conform to that description."

97. Defendants described Audi Connect and Car-Net in its advertisements, press releases, specifications provided to dealers, information provided to the press, and through other media as adaptable to changing technologies which it knew would be communicated to consumers either directly or indirectly. Defendants' description included that the Car Connect Audi Connect would function as represented for the life the Cars indefinitely were express warranties by description under N.J. Stat. § 12A:2-313(b).

98. Defendants' express warranties by description were designed to induce Plaintiff and other members of the Class to purchase the Cars.

99. Defendants express warranties by description became part of the basis of the bargain into which Plaintiff and other members of the Class entered when they purchased the Cars.

100. Given the modern significance of compatibility of vehicles with cell phones, protocols and wireless standards as represented by Defendants' prominent representations. The natural tendency of the descriptions of Car-Net and/or Audi Connect was to induce the purchase or lease of the Cars.

101. Defendants' breached express warranties by description with Plaintiff and other members of the Class by delivering Cars that were not, and never could be, compatible with later generators of service.

102. By delivering a vehicle with Car-Net and/or Audi Connect limited to 3G only and lacking compatibility with next generations, Defendants has breached its express warranty by description to the purchasers and lessees of the Cars, including the Plaintiff and members of the Class.

103. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' breach of its express warranties by description with Plaintiff and the members of the Class, Plaintiff and the members of the Class did not receive the full benefit of their bargain and suffered damage by receiving vehicles that were less valuable than the vehicles that Defendants had represented to them, and by paying out-of-pocket costs in order to ensure that the Cars Car-Net and/or Audi Connect features could operate on next generation facilities.

104. Defendants are liable to Plaintiff and the members of the Class for all damages caused by Defendants' breach of express warranties by description.

**COUNT IV**

**Violation Of Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act, 15 U.S.C. §2310(d)1(A)  
(On Behalf of the Nationwide Class)**

105. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing paragraphs as if set forth fully in this count.

106. This claim is brought as a state law claim under 15 U.S.C. § 2310(d)(1)(A) and is before this Court as a supplemental state court claim for each of the state subclasses pursuant to diversity jurisdiction under CAFA.

107. The proposed class representative and class members are consumers within the context of the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act, 15 U.S.C. § 2301(3).

108. Cars are consumer products within the context of the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act, 15 U.S.C. § 2301(1).

109. The Defendants are suppliers and/or warrantors within the context of the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 2301(4)-(5).

110. The Defendants' express warranties are written warranties within the context of the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act, 15 U.S.C. § 2301(6). Cars implied warranties created by operation of state law are incorporated into the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act as modified by § 2308.

111. The Defendants breached the express and implied warranties accompanying Class Vehicles as described in this complaint.

112. The Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act provides a claim for any consumer who is damaged by the failure of a warrantor to comply with a written or implied warranty.

113. The Defendants' breach of their express and implied warranties was the direct and proximate cause of the proposed class representative and proposed class members' financial

harm as more fully set out in the preceding warranty counts, and constitutes a violation of the Magnuson• Moss Warranty Act.

114. Affording Defendants a reasonable opportunity to cure their breach of written warranties for Class Vehicles would be unnecessary and futile. The proposed class representative and class members have already attempted to secure coverage for their battery-related repairs without success.

115. At the time of sale or lease of each Class Vehicle, the Defendants knew, should have known, or were reckless in not knowing of their misrepresentations and omissions concerning the Class Vehicles' inability to perform as warranted, but nonetheless failed to rectify the situation and/or disclose the limitation, as described in this complaint. Under the circumstances, the remedies available under any informal settlement procedure would be inadequate and any requirement that Cars resort to an informal dispute resolution procedure and/or afford the Defendants a reasonable opportunity to cure their breach of warranties is excused and thereby deemed satisfied.

116. The proposed class representative and class members would suffer economic hardship if they returned their Cars but did not receive the return of all payments made by them.

117. Wherefore, proposed class representative and proposed class members demand judgment against the Defendants including multiple monetary damages, interest, costs and attorney's fees.

## **COUNT V**

### **Unjust Enrichment**

118. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing paragraphs as if set forth fully in this count.

119. The Defendants benefited financially from their breaches of warranty and misrepresentations as described in this complaint.

120. The proposed class representative and class members sustained monetary damages as described in this complaint.

121. Allowing the Defendants to retain their monetary enrichment from their wrongful and unlawful acts would be unjust and inequitable.

122. The proposed class representative and class members request that the Defendants disgorge their profits from their wrongful and unlawful conduct and that the Court establish a constructive trust funded by the benefits conferred upon the Defendants as a result of their wrongful conduct. The proposed class representative and class members should be designated beneficiaries of the trust and obtain restitution for their out-of-pocket expenses caused by the Defendants' conduct.

123. Wherefore, the proposed class representative and class members demand judgment against defendant for multiple damages, interest, costs and attorneys' fees.

**PRAYERS FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for relief in the form of an order as follows:

- a. Certifying this action as a class action under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23, and appointing Plaintiff as class representative and his attorneys as class counsel;
- b. Awarding actual damages to Plaintiff and the Members of the Class;
- c. Awarding attorneys' fees, expenses, and the costs of this suit, together with prejudgment and post-judgment interest at the maximum rate allowed by law; and
- d. Awarding such other and further relief which the Court finds just and proper.



**JURY DEMAND**

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all claims so triable.

Dated: October 24, 2022

SQUITIERI & FEARON, LLP

By: /s/Lee Squitieri

Lee Squitieri

305 Broadway

7th Floor

New York, New York 10007

(212) 421-6492

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS
MICHAEL L. RAFFO, on behalf of himself and all others
similarly situated
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Nassau
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)
SQUITIERI & FEARON, LLP
305 Broadway, 7th Fl., NY, NY 10007 (212) 421-6492

DEFENDANTS
VOLKSWAGEN GROUP OF AMERICA, INC. and
VOLKSWAGEN AG, a German corporation
County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Fairfax
(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)
NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF
THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.
Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
2 U.S. Government Defendant
3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- Citizen of This State PTF DEF 1 1
Citizen of Another State 2 2
Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country 3 3
Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State 4 4
Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State 5 5
Foreign Nation 6 6

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.

Table with columns: CONTRACT, REAL PROPERTY, CIVIL RIGHTS, TORTS, PRISONER PETITIONS, FORFEITURE/PENALTY, LABOR, IMMIGRATION, BANKRUPTCY, SOCIAL SECURITY, FEDERAL TAX SUITS, OTHER STATUTES. Includes various legal categories like Personal Injury, Contract, Labor, etc.

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 Original Proceeding
2 Removed from State Court
3 Remanded from Appellate Court
4 Reinstated or Reopened
5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer
8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):
28 U.S.C. Sections 1332(d) and 1453
Brief description of cause:
Class action

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. DEMAND \$ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions): JUDGE Esther Salas DOCKET NUMBER 2:22-cv-05896-ES-ESK

DATE SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

October 24, 2022

Handwritten signature of Esther Salas

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # AMOUNT APPLYING IFP JUDGE MAG. JUDGE

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44**

## Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence.** For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys.** Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.  
 United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here. United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.  
 Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.  
 Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)
- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If there are multiple nature of suit codes associated with the case, pick the nature of suit code that is most applicable. Click here for: [Nature of Suit Code Descriptions](#).
- V. Origin.** Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.  
 Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.  
 Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441.  
 Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.  
 Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.  
 Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.  
 Multidistrict Litigation – Transfer. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407.  
 Multidistrict Litigation – Direct File. (8) Check this box when a multidistrict case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket.  
**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NOT AN ORIGIN CODE 7.** Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statute.
- VI. Cause of Action.** Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.** Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service.
- VII. Requested in Complaint.** Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.  
 Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction.  
 Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases.** This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

**Date and Attorney Signature.** Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

AO 440 (Rev. 12/09) Summons in a Civil Action

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

for the

\_\_\_\_\_ District of \_\_\_\_\_

_____	)	
<i>Plaintiff</i>	)	
	)	
v.	)	Civil Action No.
	)	
_____	)	
<i>Defendant</i>	)	

**SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION**

To: *(Defendant's name and address)*

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

*CLERK OF COURT*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk*

Civil Action No. \_\_\_\_\_

**PROOF OF SERVICE**

*(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))*

This summons for *(name of individual and title, if any)* \_\_\_\_\_  
was received by me on *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_.

I personally served the summons on the individual at *(place)* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ on *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_; or

I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with *(name)* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,  
on *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_, and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

I served the summons on *(name of individual)* \_\_\_\_\_, who is  
designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ on *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_; or

I returned the summons unexecuted because \_\_\_\_\_; or

Other *(specify):* \_\_\_\_\_.

My fees are \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for travel and \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for services, for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Server's signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed name and title*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Server's address*

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc: