

# 2027 TCRA Seminar – April 9-10th, 2027 – Omaha Nebraska

July 26, 2026

The 2027 TCRA Seminar will be held in Omaha Nebraska and hosted by Certified Transmissions.

The event is scheduled for April 9-10th, 2027.

Hotel and other details to follow in the next Newsletter.



# Diagnosed as a Converter, Fixed with a Laptop

July 26, 2026

## A Ford 8F35 Shudder Complaint Resolved Through Calibration Updates

A Case Study Involving a Ford 8F35 Transmission

By Christina McGee

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A 2020 Ford Transit Connect equipped with an 8F35 transmission was brought to our shop for a second opinion regarding a torque converter shudder complaint.

The customer reported a repeatable shudder during light throttle operation. Another repair facility had evaluated the vehicle and recommended torque converter replacement as the corrective action.

Given the nature of the complaint, the recommendation was understandable. Torque converter clutch shudder is a common concern, and in many cases converter replacement is an appropriate repair. However, before recommending transmission removal, a complete diagnostic evaluation was performed.

### Initial Evaluation

The shudder occurred consistently under light throttle conditions at lower vehicle speeds. No transmission-related diagnostic trouble codes were present.

As part of the diagnostic process, Ford service information was reviewed and the vehicle was checked for applicable Technical Service Bulletins (TSBs), recalls, service actions, and calibration updates using Ford's Factory Diagnostic and Repair System (FDRS).

During the inspection, FDRS identified available software updates applicable to the vehicle.

\*Figure 1: Vehicle Identification and Module Status in Ford FDRS\*

\*Figure 2: Available Software Updates Identified During Diagnosis\*

### Repair Procedure

Based on the available service information and programming updates identified through FDRS, the applicable software update was performed.

Following module programming, the transmission strategy was updated in accordance with Ford service procedures.

No transmission components were removed, repaired, or replaced during this process.

### Verification

After programming was completed, the vehicle was road tested under the same operating conditions that previously produced the complaint.

The shudder condition could no longer be duplicated.

The repair was considered complete without any transmission disassembly or component replacement.

### Case Summary

Vehicle: 2020 Ford Transit Connect

Engine: 2.0L Duratec

Transmission: 8F35

Customer Complaint: Torque converter shudder during light throttle operation

Previous Recommendation: Replace torque converter

Diagnostic Findings: Applicable Ford software update available

Repair Performed: Module programming and transmission strategy update

Parts Replaced: None

Result: Shudder eliminated

## Discussion

This case highlights the importance of including software and calibration verification as part of the diagnostic process when addressing transmission concerns.

The torque converter shudder experienced by the customer was a legitimate complaint. However, the root cause was not a mechanical failure of the torque converter. The condition was corrected through a software update, confirming that the concern was related to calibration strategy rather than a defective transmission component.

Had a torque converter been installed without first identifying the available software update, the original complaint would likely have remained present because the underlying cause had not been addressed.

Situations such as this can create unnecessary expenses for the customer and additional diagnostic time for the repair facility. In some cases, a replacement converter may later be removed and submitted as a warranty return despite functioning properly, resulting in unnecessary costs throughout the supply chain while the original concern remains unresolved.

For transmission rebuilders and manufacturers, cases like this serve as a reminder that not every torque converter shudder is the result of a torque converter failure.

## Conclusion

The customer's complaint was resolved through a manufacturer-recommended software update without transmission removal or component replacement.

This case demonstrates the value of reviewing current service information, calibration updates, recalls, and technical service bulletins before recommending major transmission repairs. As vehicle control systems continue to evolve, software-related concerns will increasingly become part of the diagnostic process, making access to current OEM information more important than ever.

<https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2021/MC-10203649-0001.pdf>

# Leno's Law Advances Toward Next Key Vote

July 25, 2026

California's **"Leno's Law"** has cleared another key checkpoint. SEMA-backed **SB 1392**, authored by **Sens. Dave Cortese** and **Shannon Grove**, and sponsored by **future SEMA Hall of Famer Jay Leno**, passed the **California Assembly Transportation Committee** with bipartisan support, 13-0. The bill now heads to the **Assembly Appropriations Committee**.

Leno's Law creates a narrow collector-vehicle smog-check exemption for certain older vehicles, phased in from pre-'81 models to pre-'86 models by 2032. To qualify, owners must either provide proof of collector car insurance or show, through a future DMV process, that the vehicle is driven fewer than 1,000 miles per year. The bill does not change California's existing pre-'76 exemption.

This year's effort continues to gain momentum because enthusiasts, small businesses, lowriders, historians collectors, restorers and community advocates have stayed engaged at every step, helping show lawmakers that Leno's Law is about preserving the vehicles, businesses and culture that make California the center of American car culture.

SEMA will continue working to keep the bill moving, but support from the automotive community remains critical as the bill enters its next stage.

# SEMA Economic Update: What Recent Market Trends Mean for the Aftermarket

July 25, 2026

Even with the conflict in the Gulf and Strait of Hormuz not entirely settled, the markets positively reacted to the reopening of shipping routes. **Crude oil prices** dropped to roughly **\$70 per barrel** after hitting a peak of more than \$100 in April and May. The \$70 price point nearly brings the cost of crude down to the pre-conflict \$65 range. Hundreds of ships have passed through the Strait since the cease-fire agreement: While it will take time to get supply chains stocked, the resumption of the supply of oil and other goods should ease price and supply pressure.

In May, the **Consumer Price Index** rose to **4.2%**, largely driven by a **23.5%** increase in energy costs, most notably a 40.5% surge in gas prices, while other categories remained constant. With crude oil dropping, gas prices are following suit, with the national average for regular gasoline down nearly \$.60 per gallon from a month ago. Gas prices are one of the most visible signs of inflation, so falling prices ease the minds of consumers.

With **inflation** somewhat elevated, the Fed kept the federal funds rate unchanged at **3.50%–3.75%** in June 2026, as expected. The current rate is significantly lower than it was in 2025, which may enable consumers to refinance auto loans at lower rates. Fed governors seem to be split on whether there should be additional cuts or possible rate hikes later in the year. So far, these interest rates have not shown a negative impact on employment.

The **unemployment rate** held steady in May at **4.3%**, while the economy gained **172,000 jobs**. The employment market has stayed very stable with an unemployment rate between **4.3%–4.5%** over the last year. The **Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia Survey of Professional Forecasters** predicts the unemployment rate to remain steady with an average between 4.4%–4.5% over the next few quarters. The stable job market should keep consumers confident in their ability to spend through the remainder of the year.

The economy continues to grow, and the **U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis** reported that real GDP increased at an annual rate of **2.1%** in **Q1 2026**. This growth is significantly higher than the **0.5%** rate reported in **Q4 2025**. Consumers are better off, with personal income increasing **\$181.6 billion (0.7% at a monthly rate)** in May. Spending was up by **0.7%** with an added **\$156.1 billion** pumped into the economy. Motor vehicle and parts spending was up by **\$5.4 billion** in May. Total consumer spending reached **\$22 trillion** in May and has shown no signs of slowing down. The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia Survey of Professional Forecasters predicts real GDP to expand 2.2% in 2026.

While there continues to be uncertainty globally, key indicators of the U.S. economy such as employment, income and spending remain strong. As shipping returns to normal and supply chains catch up, the expectation is that it will relieve some pricing pressures across the market. As gas prices decline and job security remains strong, consumers are likely to stay confident in their spending, continuing to support GDP growth and activity in our market.

The new **"2026 SEMA Market Report"** was just released and shows that the U.S. specialty-equipment industry remained strong through 2025. The overall accessory and performance parts market grew about 1% to a new high of \$52.92 billion in retail sales. While passenger cars continue to be solid targets for accessorizing, light trucks have become the major sector within automotive and the aftermarket. Pickup modifications account for 30% of the market, as they are such a great platform for off-road, utility and performance upgrades.

For the latest on the size and scope of the specialty-equipment market, download the just released **"2026 SEMA Market Report."** SEMA members can download the report for free at [www.sema.org/research](http://www.sema.org/research)

# MEMA Aftermarket Suppliers Responds to White House Memo

July 25, 2026

MEMA Aftermarket Suppliers issued the following statement in response to the White House's presidential memorandum, "Lowering the Cost of Living by Promoting the Freedom to Fix."

"While MEMA understands that there are many different issues active in the landscape of vehicle ownership and use, the Dunn REPAIR Act remains the best, most comprehensive solution to ensure an even playing field for the aftermarket ecosystem, which services millions of vehicles in the U.S. every year. We continue to encourage members of Congress to take action on this important issue to ensure all Americans have access to safe, affordable, high-quality maintenance and repairs wherever they choose," said Emily Poladian, president of MEMA Aftermarket Suppliers.

## Presidential Memorandum and Right to Repair

"Right to repair is an integral issue that has long been a focus of multiple stakeholders in the transportation community. The presidential memorandum of June 29 rightly recognizes that affordable vehicle repairs and consumer choice are important issues.

## Dunn REPAIR Act as Comprehensive Solution

"However, the document itself focuses primarily on select activities related to emissions systems and does not address the broader challenges facing today's automotive aftermarket that the Dunn REPAIR Act was designed to solve.

MEMA firmly believes that consumers deserve the ability to choose where they wish to have their vehicles repaired as well as which components can be used to ensure the proper functioning of their vehicle. As vehicles become more software-driven and connected, independent repair facilities and aftermarket manufacturers need access to the information, diagnostics, tools, software, and vehicle data required to service modern vehicles and ensure replacement parts function properly. The Dunn REPAIR Act establishes a modern federal framework that ensures fair access to these resources, preserves consumer choice, promotes competition, and helps keep high-quality vehicle repairs affordable.

## Commitment to Work With the Administration and Congress

"Without these protections, consumers face fewer repair options, independent repair businesses have less ability to compete, and aftermarket manufacturers face growing barriers to developing and supporting competitive replacement parts for today's vehicles. MEMA remains committed to working with the administration and Congress to advance a comprehensive federal right-to-repair framework that expands consumer choice, strengthens competition, and lowers repair costs."

## TO REACH OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

This private group is limited to members only and can be accessed by using the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/666871553488814>

Should you encounter any issues, please contact Chris Horbach at [chorbach@tcraonline.com](mailto:chorbach@tcraonline.com)

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