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HOUSTON — Public Citizen Inc. wants 61st District Judge John Donovan to turn down a request from Ford Motor Co. and Bridgestone-Firestone Inc. for a protective order that would keep documents in a tire-tread suit private. Public Citizen, a nonprofit public interest group founded by Ralph Nader, filed the amicus curiae brief in a suit filed in state court by a Crosby woman who was injured in an accident in 1999 in a Ford Explorer equipped



MITHOFF

with Firestone tires. Tire-tread litigation has been in the spotlight since August when Firestone recalled 6.5 million tires in the wake of a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration investigation into reports of deaths in accidents involving Explorers equipped with the tires. Public Citizen lawyer Amanda Frost alleges in the amicus brief the documents at issue would contain information about the design and manufacture of the tires and the Explorer and might indicate design defects with other tires manufactured by Firestone or with the Explorer. "In view of the recall, in view of the obvious widespread public concern over safety, we think the documents should be made public," says plaintiffs' lawyer Richard Mithoff, a partner in Mithoff & Jacks in Houston. Defense attorneys for Firestone and Ford did not return telephone messages by press time on Sept. 21.

The amicus curiae brief and the original petition in Peggy Turner Trahan v. Elvin Hayes Ford, et al. are available on law.com/texas.