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Dear Floridians:

The Florida New Motor Vehicle Arbitration Board, housed in the Lemon Law Arbitration Division of the Attorney General's Office, is a free and effective forum for the resolution of disputes between consumers and motor vehicle manufacturers under Florida's "Lemon Law." Consumers have recovered more than $\$ 457$ million in refunds and vehicle replacements via settlements and arbitration awards since the first case was filed in 1989.

This report focuses on disputes filed with the Office of the Attorney General that were approved for arbitration before the Florida New Motor Vehicle Arbitration Board for calendar years 2014 through 2016. The report includes a summary comparison of results from 1989 through 2016. Also reported is the total number of motor vehicles identified by manufacturers as having been reacquired in 2014 through 2016.

Consumers can obtain information about Florida's Lemon Law and search a list of vehicles repurchased by motor vehicle manufacturers on the home page of the Office of the Attorney General at www.myfloridalegal.com.

Sincerely,


Pam Bondi
Attorney General

## INTRODUCTION

Florida's "Lemon Law," Chapter 681, Florida Statutes, allows consumers to receive replacement motor vehicles or purchase price refunds when their new or demonstrator motor vehicles are subjected to repeated, unsuccessful repairs for the same defect or condition, or are constantly in the shop for repair of one or more different defects or conditions. The defects or conditions must substantially impair the use, value or safety of the vehicle, and must first be reported to the manufacturer or its authorized service agent during a specified period after the consumer takes delivery of the vehicle. If the manufacturer fails to provide the remedy required by statute, the consumer can arbitrate the claim before the Florida New Motor Vehicle Arbitration Board.

The Board consists of members appointed by the Attorney General and conducts arbitration hearings throughout the state. Arbitration is an "all-or-nothing" proposition for the consumer, who will either win an award of a refund or replacement vehicle or have the claim dismissed. Section 681.1095, Florida Statutes, requires the Attorney General to compile annual statistics for all disputes submitted to the Board. In 2011, the law was changed to require that requests for arbitration be filed with and screened by the Office of the Attorney General, instead of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Claim filing with the Attorney General's Office commenced on May 26, 2011. As a result, in some instances, comparisons between more recent reports and those for 2010 and years prior will not be possible. Where such a comparison is possible, the information has been provided. The information contained in this report was derived from the records of the Attorney General's Lemon Law Arbitration Division. This report covers claims filed with the Office of the Attorney General and approved for arbitration from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2016.

Disputes are reported by manufacturer. In cases involving some motor vehicles, a single claim could involve multiple manufacturers. In those instances, approval of the claim for arbitration is credited to the "nameplate" manufacturer (the name of the manufacturer under which the vehicle was sold). In reporting the dollar values of arbitration awards, all manufacturers found liable by the Board in each case are listed; however, the per-case dollar amount of the award is not pro-rated. For example, if two manufacturers were found liable to pay the consumer in one case a refund of $\$ 60,000$, only the total amount of the award is reflected in this report, along with the names of both liable manufacturers. The law does not give the Board the authority to pro-rate awards in multiple manufacturer cases.

## EXECUTIVE PROGRAM SUMMARI

During the calendar years 2014 through 2016, a total of 1,666 arbitration claims were filed with the Office of the Attorney General. This represents an increase of just over 500 claims as compared to the prior 3-year period (2011-2013). Purchase price refunds were requested in 80.6 percent $(1,343)$ of cases filed, while replacement vehicles were requested in 19.4 percent (323). Of the 1,666 cases filed, 277 cases were rejected by the Office of the Attorney General as outside of the scope of the Arbitration Board's authority, and 116 were withdrawn by the consumer. The remaining 1,273 claims were approved for arbitration. This report focuses upon the outcomes of the cases that were approved for arbitration. From January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2016, a total of 84 of the approved cases were voluntarily withdrawn by consumers prior to resolution. The remaining 1,189 cases were resolved via prehearing settlement (675) or arbitration decision (514). The dollar amount of relief obtained totaled over $\$ 31$ million for the three-year period.
TABLE 1. 2014-2016 CASES FILED FOR ARBITRATION; CASES REJECTED/ NOT APPROVED AND CASES WITHDRAWN/NOT APPROVED

| Manufacturer | Cases Filed | Cases Rejected- <br> Not Approved | Cases WithdrawnNot Approved | Cases Approved |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| AMERICAN HONDA/ACURA | 79 | 7 | 4 | 68 |
| BENTLEY | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| BMW | 96 | 11 | 5 | 80 |
| CHRYSLER/FCA US LLC | 620 | 48 | 37 | 535 |
| CLUB CAR | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| DAIMLER VEHICLE INNOVATIONS USA, LLC | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| FERRARI | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| FORD | 239 | 83 | 15 | 141 |
| GENERAL MOTORS | 152 | 48 | 17 | 87 |
| HYUNDAI | 65 | 15 | 8 | 42 |
| JaGUAR | 11 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| KANDI | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| KIA | 36 | 10 | 8 | 18 |
| LaND ROVER | 17 | 1 | 0 | 16 |
| LOTUS | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| MASERATI | 29 | 1 | 1 | 27 |
| MAZDA | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

TABLE 1. 2014-2016 CASES FILED FOR ARBITRATION; CASES REJECTED/ NOT APPROVED AND CASES WITHDRAWN/NOT APPROVED (Continued)

| Manufacturer | Cases Filed | Cases Rejected- <br> Not Approved | Cases Withdrawn- <br> Not Approved | Cases Approved |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| MERCEDES-BENZ | 89 | 8 | 6 | 75 |
| MITSUBISHI | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| MOTO | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| NISSAN/INFINITI | 57 | 12 | 6 | 39 |
| ORGANIC TRANSIT | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| POLARIS | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| PORSCHE | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| SUBARU | 14 | 0 | 1 | 13 |
| THOR RV | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TESLA | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOYOTA/LEXUS | 81 | 19 | 3 | 59 |
| UNIVERSAL TRAILER SALES | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| VOLKSWAGEN/AUDI | 39 | 7 | 1 | 31 |
| VOLVO | 10 | 2 | 2 | 6 |

GRAPH A. COMPARES THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES APPROVED FOR ARBITRATION FROM 2014 TO 2016


## CASES APPROVED FOR ARBITRATION

Since mid-2011, consumers have requested arbitration of their Lemon Law disputes by filing a Request for Arbitration form with the Lemon Law Arbitration Division of the Attorney General's Office. The forms are screened for eligibility under a process governed by statute. If a request is determined eligible, it is approved for arbitration, the parties are notified of the approval, and the case is assigned to the appropriate regional office of the Lemon Law Arbitration division for administration and the scheduling of a hearing.

Claims were approved against 31 manufacturers during the three-year report period. The number of cases approved for each manufacturer is reflected in Table 2. Claims withdrawn by consumers for reasons other than settlement are also depicted. Manufacturers are identified by the nameplate under which the vehicles were sold.

TABLE 2. 2014-2016 CASES APPROVED FOR ARBITRATION AND CASES WITHDRAWN AFTER APPROVAL

| Manufacturer | Cases Approved | Cases Withdrawn <br> After Approval |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| AMERICAN HONDA/ACURA | 68 | 3 |
| BENTLEY | 2 | 1 |
| BMW | 80 | 7 |
| CHRYSLER/FCA US LLC | 535 | 26 |
| CLUB CAR | 1 | 1 |
| DAIMLER VEHICLE INNOVATIONS USA, LLC | 2 | 0 |
| FERRARI | 4 | 0 |
| FORD | 141 | 11 |
| GENERAL MOTORS | 87 | 6 |
| HYUNDAI | 42 | 2 |

## TABLE 2. 2014-2016 CASES APPROVED FOR ARBITRATION AND CASES WITHDRAWN AFTER APPROVAL (Continued)

$\left.\begin{array}{|lcc|}\hline & \text { Manufacturer } & \text { Cases Approved }\end{array} \begin{array}{c}\text { Cases Withdrawn } \\ \text { After Approval }\end{array}\right)$

## PREHEARING SETTLLMENTS

Consumer claims were resolved by settlement between the parties in 53 percent (675) of the 1,273 approved cases for the three-year report period. "Full" settlements, or settlements for the same full refund or vehicle replacement consumers would have obtained had they prevailed in arbitration, numbered 599, while the remaining 76 cases were settled for something less than full relief. Generally, these partial settlements were for such things as additional repairs, extended warranties, or partial cash payments. A breakdown of the settlement rates by year shows that, for the first time since 2006, yearly settlement rates exceeded 50 percent of cases approved for hearing: 59.1 percent of the cases approved in 2015 were resolved by settlement between the parties (274 out of 464 cases), as were 51.7 percent of the cases approved in 2016 ( 230 out of 445 cases). The settlement rate for 2014 was 47 percent ( 171 out of 364 cases).

Tables 3 and 4 identify the manufacturers entering into partial and full settlements with consumers during the three-year report period, and the total dollar values of the full settlements. The nature of most partial settlements prevents assignment of dollar values to them.

TABLE 3. 2014-2016 NUMBER OF "PARTIAL" SETTLEMENTS

| Manufacturer | Number |
| :--- | :---: |
| AMERICAN HONDA/ACURA | 6 |
| BMW | 12 |
| CHRYSLER | 19 |
| FORD | 4 |
| GENERAL MOTORS | 6 |
| HYUNDAI | 2 |
| JAGUAR | 1 |
| KIA | 3 |
| LAND ROVER | 1 |
| MASERATI | 6 |
| MAZDA | 2 |
| MERCEDES-BENZ | 9 |
| MOTO | 1 |
| NISSAN/INFINITI | 1 |
| POLARIS | 1 |
| TOYOTA/LEXUS | 2 |

## TABLE 4. 2014-2016 NUMBER, PERCENT, AND VALUE OF FULL SETTLEMENTS

| Manufacturer |  | Full Settlements | Percentages of All Settlements | Value of Full Settlements |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| AMERICAN HONDA/ACURA |  | 16 | 2.67\% | \$ 529,904.00 |
| BMW |  | 12 | 2.00\% | \$ 719,261.00 |
| CHRYSLER |  | 398 | 66.44\% | \$13,509,428.00 |
| DAIMLER VEHICLE |  | 2 | 0.33\% | \$ 23,915.00 |
| FERRARI |  | 1 | 0.17\% | \$ 255,520.00 |
| FORD |  | 26 | 4.34\% | \$ 722,339.00 |
| GENERAL MOTORS |  | 39 | 6.51\% | \$ 1,699,129.00 |
| HYUNDAI |  | 1 | 0.17\% | \$ 15,467.00 |
| JAGUAR |  | 2 | 0.33\% | \$ 181,199.00 |
| KIA |  | 4 | 0.67\% | \$ 115,409.00 |
| LAND ROVER |  | 11 | 1.84\% | \$ 687,069.00 |
| LOTUS |  | 1 | 0.17\% | \$ 82,056.00 |
| MASERATI |  | 13 | 2.17\% | \$ 1,143,695.00 |
| MERCEDES-BENZ |  | 23 | 3.84\% | \$ 1,714,122.00 |
| MITSUBISHI |  | 1 | 0.17\% | \$ 21,366.00 |
| NISSAN/INFIIITI |  | 12 | 2.00\% | \$ 396,128.00 |
| PORSCHE |  | 1 | 0.17\% | \$ 87,455.00 |
| SUBARU |  | 9 | 1.50\% | \$ 248,990.00 |
| TESLA |  | 1 | 0.17\% | \$ 165,799.00 |
| THOR |  | 1 | 0.17\% | \$ 86,660.00 |
| TOYOTA/LEXUS |  | 15 | 2.50\% | \$ 490,520.00 |
| VOLKSWAGEN/AUDI |  | 3 | 0.50\% | \$ 137,678.00 |
| VOLVO |  | 7 | 1.17\% | \$ 285,409.00 |
|  | TOTALS | 599 | 100.00\% | \$23,318,518.00 |

## DECISIONS BI THE ARBITRATION BOARD

Cases that were not withdrawn or settled went to hearings before the Florida New Motor Vehicle Arbitration Board. During the three years covered by this report, as many as 79 Florida citizens served as members of the statewide Arbitration Board. Board members have diverse backgrounds, and include individuals in the legal, education, automotive mechanical, engineering, alternative dispute resolution, and business professions. They perform a very valuable public service for very little compensation.

Cases are assigned to geographical regions from Pensacola to Miami, depending upon the residence address of the consumer. Arbitration hearings are conducted by three-member panels of the Board in public locations throughout the state. If the consumer prevails at hearing, a refund or replacement motor vehicle is awarded. If the manufacturer prevails, the case is dismissed. It is neither necessary nor required for parties to have attorneys to participate in arbitrations before the Florida New Motor Vehicle Arbitration Board. The Board is not empowered by the Legislature to award attorney fees to parties who prevail in arbitration.

The Board conducted a total of 514 arbitration hearings during the three-year report period. Consumers prevailed in 202 (39.3 percent) of these cases, while manufacturers prevailed in 312 (60.7 percent).

When the consumer prevails at a hearing, the Arbitration Board awards either a refund of all amounts paid to acquire the vehicle or a replacement motor vehicle, at the option of the consumer. If a refund is awarded and the "lemon" vehicle was purchased with financing, the consumer and lienholder are refunded according to their interests. Generally, such awards direct the manufacturer to pay the consumer a specified amount consisting of all expenses incurred to acquire the vehicle (e.g. cash down payment, government fees, options and accessories, extended service agreements, etc.), the net allowance for any trade-in vehicle, all periodic principal and interest payments made as of the date the vehicle is repurchased, and any reasonable costs caused by the substantial defect(s). The manufacturer is directed to pay to the lienholder the balance owed on the loan as of the repurchase date.

If the vehicle was leased, the consumer is awarded all amounts paid at lease signing, the net allowance for any trade-in vehicle, all lease payments made as of the date the vehicle is repurchased, and any reasonable costs incurred because of the substantial defect(s). The lessor is paid according to a formula set forth in the statute, and is prohibited from charging any penalty for early termination of the lease.

If a replacement motor vehicle is awarded, the replacement vehicle must be identical or reasonably equivalent to the vehicle being replaced, and it must be acceptable to the consumer. In addition, the consumer is refunded costs paid to acquire the "lemon" vehicle (e.g. options and accessories, sales tax, extended service agreements, interest paid on the loan or rental charge paid on the lease as of the date of replacement, if applicable), as well as costs incurred as a result of the substantial defect(s).

Whether the award is a refund or a replacement vehicle, a "reasonable offset for use" is charged to the consumer. The offset for use is calculated according to a statutory formula.

Table 5 shows the number, percentage and dollar values of Arbitration Board award decisions for 2014-2016, by manufacturer. Dollar values are based upon the total amount of the awards, including the loan and lease pay-offs, and any additional amounts awarded, reduced by the statutory offsets. In multiple manufacturer cases, one or several of the participating manufacturers could have been found liable for the award. If liability was assessed jointly against several participating manufacturers, these are listed separately.

Table 6 shows the number of cases dismissed, by manufacturer, and the percentage that number represents of the total number, for 2014-2016.

TABLE 5. 2014-2016 DECISION AWARDS BY LIABLE MANUFACTURER


## TABLE 6. 2014-2016 CASES DISMISSED

|  | Manufacturer |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Number | Total <br> Percentages |
| AMERICAN HONDA/ACURA | 28 | $8.97 \%$ |
| BENTLEY | 1 | $0.32 \%$ |
| BMW | 25 | $8.01 \%$ |
| CHRYSLER | 63 | $20.19 \%$ |
| FERRARI | 1 | $0.32 \%$ |
| FORD | 56 | $17.95 \%$ |
| GENERAL MOTORS | 21 | $6.73 \%$ |
| HYUNDAI | 17 | $5.45 \%$ |
| JAGUAR | 2 | $0.64 \%$ |
| KIA | 8 | $2.56 \%$ |
| LAND ROVER | 1 | $0.32 \%$ |
| MASERATI | 6 | $1.92 \%$ |
| MAZDA | 1 | $0.32 \%$ |
| MERCEDES-BENZ | 27 | $8.65 \%$ |
| MITSUBISHI | 1 | $0.32 \%$ |
| NISSAN/INFINITI | 16 | $5.13 \%$ |
| SUBARU | 2 | $0.64 \%$ |
| TOYOTA/LEXUS | 22 | $7.05 \%$ |
| UNIVERSAL TRAILER SALES | 1 | $0.32 \%$ |
| VOLKSWAGEN/AUDI | 13 | $4.17 \%$ |
|  | Totals | 312 |

## SUBSTANTIAL DEFECTS FOUND

The Lemon Law requires that the problems complained of by the consumer be "nonconformities," meaning defects or conditions that substantially impair the use, value or safety of the vehicle and that are not the result of abuse, neglect, modification or alteration of the vehicle by persons other than the manufacturer or its authorized service agent. Graphs B, C and D illustrate the number of substantial defects found by the Arbitration Board by year in the major vehicle systems or components listed. The top five nonconformities for the three-year period were defects in the engine, transmission, accessories, brakes, and air conditioning/heating.

GRAPH B. SUBSTANTIAL DEFECTS FOUND 2014


## GRAPH C. SUBSTANTIAL DEFECTS FOUND 2015



## GRAPH D. SUBSTANTIAL DEFECTS FOUND 2016



## APPEALS

Parties not satisfied with decisions of the Arbitration Board can file appeals to the circuit court. Manufacturers filed three appeals in 2014, two in 2015 and one in 2016. Consumers filed 10 appeals in 2014, 17 in 2015 and 24 in 2016. For the three-year period, appeals were filed in 11.1 percent of the 514 cases decided by the Board.


## CONCLLUSION

Graph E illustrates the total number of cases approved for the period from 1989-2016.
Table 7 and Graph F illustrate the consumer relief obtained during the period from 19892016. Of the 23,416 consumer claims approved for arbitration during that period, full relief via either prehearing settlements or decision awards was obtained in 69.7 percent $(16,328)$, for a total dollar value of more than $\$ 457$ million.

## GRAPH E CASES APPROVED FOR ARBITRATION 1989-2016



TABLE 7. 1989-2016 TOTAL CASES APPROVED AND RECOVERY VALUES

| Year | Total Number <br> of Approved Cases | Dollar Value <br> of Recoveries | Number of Cases <br> with Recoveries |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1989 | 206 | $\$ 2,925,943.00$ | 145 |
| 1990 | 726 | $\$ 11,084,254.00$ | 533 |
| 1991 | 764 | $\$ 11,645,821.00$ | 543 |
| 1992 | 817 | $\$ 12,194,871.00$ | 661 |
| 1993 | 812 | $\$ 13,955,116.00$ | 603 |
| 1994 | 867 | $\$ 15,455,498.00$ | 635 |
| 1995 | 1301 | $\$ 23,623,638.00$ | 934 |
| 1996 | 1476 | $\$ 25,716,474.00$ | 1076 |
| 1997 | 1414 | $\$ 25,407,219.00$ | 1014 |
| 1998 | 1264 | $\$ 26,103,773.00$ | 905 |
| 1999 | 1364 | $\$ 24,284,201.00$ | 953 |
| 2000 | 1255 | $\$ 22,199,403.00$ | 863 |
| 2001 | 1227 | $\$ 22,144,257.00$ | 850 |
| 2002 | 1290 | $\$ 22,730,626.00$ | 832 |
| 2003 | 1203 | $\$ 25,311,738.00$ | 825 |
| 2004 | 1033 | $\$ 23,626,887.00$ | 714 |
| 2005 | 1075 | $\$ 25,755,869.00$ | 784 |
| 2006 | 859 | $\$ 22,047,619.00$ | 611 |
| 2007 | 839 | $\$ 17,995,763.00$ | 500 |
| 2008 | 658 | $\$ 13,266,987.00$ | 404 |
| 2009 | 444 | $\$ 8,851,875.00$ | 254 |
| 2010 | 315 | $\$ 7,415,805.00$ | 204 |
| 2011 | 272 | $\$ 5,987,621.00$ | 168 |
| 2012 | 307 | $\$ 7,280,706.00$ | 207 |
| 2013 | 355 | $\$ 8,670,318.00$ | 235 |
| 2014 | 364 | $\$ 8,961,428.55$ | 241 |
| 2015 | 464 | $\$ 12,406,702.32$ | 336 |
| 2016 | 445 | $\$ 10,021,220.00$ | 298 |
|  | 23416 | $\$ 457,071,633.05$ | 16328 |
|  |  |  |  |

GRAPH F. 1989-2016 TOTAL CASES APPROVED AND RECOVERY VALUES


## MANUFACTURER REPORTED VEHICLE REPURCHASES

Under Florida's Lemon Law, manufacturers are required to notify the Office of the Attorney General when they reacquire new vehicles from the original owners under certain conditions specified by the statute. This notification is made on a form that includes identification of the vehicle, the reason for the buy-back, and disclosure of the reported defects. A portion of the form is sent by the manufacturer to the Office of the Attorney General, with the remainder of the form required to travel with the vehicle and be provided to the retail buyer if or when the vehicle is resold.

When a disclosure form is received from a manufacturer, the information reported by the manufacturer is entered in a database maintained by the Lemon Law Arbitration Division of the Attorney General's Office. This information also forms the basis for the searchable database of repurchased vehicles that is accessible on the Attorney General's website.

Table 8 lists by vehicle make the number of vehicles reported by manufacturers as having been repurchased for 2014 through 2016. The total number reported was 5,699 . Included in that number were vehicles bought back as a result of settlements or decisions of claims before the Florida New Motor Vehicle Arbitration Board, along with vehicles repurchased for a variety of other reasons, including settlements or decisions of manufacturer-sponsored procedures, similar statutes of other states (a number of the reported repurchases originated in states other than Florida), court settlements or decisions, and reasons characterized as "customer goodwill."

## TABLE 8. 2014-2016 MANUFACTURER-REPORTED VEHICLES REACQUIRED

|  | Reporting Manufacturer | Number of Vehicles <br> Repurchased |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Acura | American Honda Motor Company | 45 |
| Audi | Volkswagen/Audi of America Inc. | 15 |
| BMW | BMW of North America, LLC | 188 |
| Buick | General Motors LLC | 48 |
| Cadillac | General Motors LLC | 200 |
| Chevrolet | General Motors LLC | 466 |
| Chrysler | FCA US LLC, $\mathrm{f} / \mathrm{k} /$ a Chrysler Group LLC | 209 |

## TABLE 8. 2014-2016 MANUFACTURER-REPORTED VEHICLES REACQUIRED (Continued)

$\left.\begin{array}{|lcc|}\hline & \text { Vehicle Make } & \text { Reporting Manufacturer }\end{array} \begin{array}{c}\text { Number of Vehicles } \\ \text { Repurchased }\end{array}\right)$


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