



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate votes to strengthen Oregon's Lemon Law *SB 515 extends period of time that vehicles are covered*

SALEM – Oregonians who purchase automobiles that turn out to be ‘lemons’ will have longer to make their claim under legislation passed this morning by the Senate. SB 515 changes the period of time for a consumer to notify a manufacturer that a new vehicle doesn’t conform to its warranty to 24 months or 24,000 miles, whichever is earlier.

“Twenty-two states have lemon laws that cover consumers for a longer period of time than Oregon,” said Senator Suzanne Bonamici (D-Washington Co./Portland), chair of the Senate Consumer Protection Committee. “This bill should improve consumer confidence when it comes to making an investment in a new car.”

“Lemons” are generally defined as cars that continue to have a defect that substantially impairs the use, value, or safety of the vehicle after a reasonable number of attempts to repair the car or after the car has been out of service for a particular number of days. SB 515 reduces the number of times a vehicle must be serviced for the same defect before being considered a ‘lemon’ from four to three. In cases where the defect is life threatening, the state will no longer require multiple attempts to fix the defect.

“People don’t have time to be constantly taking their car into the shop for the same problem,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “If they purchase a car, they do so with the expectation that the vehicle is dependable and safe. They shouldn’t have to jump through hoops if the car turns out to have serious defects.”

In addition to increasing the covered period, SB 515 requires a vehicle manufacturer to alert the Oregon Department of Transportation to inscribe on the title ‘Lemon Law Buyback.’ Currently, Oregon is one of only a few states that do not require this disclosure to consumers.

“A consumer deserves to know if the vehicle they purchase has a bad past,” said Senator Ginny Burdick (D-Portland). “Buying a car is a major investment for most of us and we need to be sure we know what we’re getting with our hard earned money.”

Also this morning, the Senate passed HB 2268, requiring vehicle repair shops to prepare cost estimates before beginning work on an automobile. In instances where estimated costs exceed \$200, repair shops will be

required to receive additional specific authorization before starting more expensive projects on the automobile.

“This state receives a number of consumer complaints each year by Oregonians who receive higher than anticipated bills for auto work,” said Devlin. “This is another measure to bolster consumer confidence in the products and services that Oregon families rely on.”

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