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**FLORIDA'S LEMON LAW PROGRAM CELEBRATES 20-YEAR
ANNIVERSARY, PASSES \$376 MILLION MARK IN CONSUMER
RESTITUTION**

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Celebrating its 20-year anniversary, Florida's Lemon Law Arbitration Program has surpassed the \$376 million mark in refunds and replacements for consumers who bought incessantly defective new vehicles. At a St. Petersburg training session for the program's arbitrators, Attorney General Bill McCollum today announced that over the past 20 years, the Lemon Law program has produced refunds or replacement vehicles for more than 14,000 consumers.

“For 20 years, Florida's Lemon Law program has been a model of consumer protection efforts for other states and even other countries to emulate,” said Attorney General McCollum. “Floridians can count on my office's assistance when their new car turns out to be a lemon, and \$376 million in relief certainly demonstrates the value of this free consumer service.”

Florida's Lemon Law gives manufacturers a reasonable number of attempts to repair substantial defects in a motor vehicle. If manufacturers fail to do so, they are required to buy back the defective vehicle and either pay a refund to the consumer or provide a replacement vehicle. Consumers are protected under the Lemon Law for 24 months after the date of delivery of the vehicle. Anyone who experiences problems with a new vehicle during that period should immediately take the vehicle to the manufacturer's authorized dealer.

Since 1988, the Attorney General's Lemon Law unit has handled 20,178 cases. The total dollar value of the recoveries is \$376,156,729 with additional cases pending. The Lemon Law Arbitration Program offers consumers a quick and free alternative to court litigation to resolve disputes and is jointly administered by the Attorney General's Office and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The program has been so successful that representatives from Japan, Great Britain and Australia have sought information from Florida to assist with their efforts to develop lemon laws in those countries.

The Lemon Law arbitration process does not require consumers to retain an attorney in order to participate and consumers who lose an arbitration case are not required to pay the manufacturer's attorney fees, as may be the case in unsuccessful litigation conducted outside the program.

Detailed information about the Lemon Law Arbitration Program is available through the Attorney General's website at <http://myfloridalegal.com/lemonlaw>. Consumers who have

questions about their rights under Florida's Lemon Law may also call the Lemon Law Hotline toll-free at 1-800-321-5366.

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