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AB-1849 Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act: services and repairs: travel trailers and motor homes.
(2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 1849

CHAPTER 196

An act to amend Sections 1791 and 1793.2 of the Civil Code, relating to consumer warranties.

[Approved by Governor August 26, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State August 26, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1849, Grayson. Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act: services and repairs: travel trailers and motor homes.

The Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act requires every manufacturer of consumer goods sold in the state for which the manufacturer has made an express warranty to maintain sufficient service and repair facilities, as specified, to carry out the terms of the warranties. Existing law requires a manufacturer or its representative who fails to service or repair goods pursuant to an express warranty, after a reasonable number of attempts, to replace those goods or to reimburse the buyer, as specified.

This bill, if a manufacturer or its representative does not service or repair a travel trailer or a portion of a motor home, as specified, to conform to applicable express warranties after a reasonable number of attempts, would authorize a buyer to elect reimbursement in lieu of replacement, and would specify that the buyer is not required to accept a replacement travel trailer or motor home. The bill would define terms for these purposes.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 1791 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1791. As used in this chapter:

(a) "Consumer goods" means any new product or part thereof that is used, bought, or leased for use primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, except for clothing and consumables. "Consumer goods" shall include new and used assistive devices sold at retail.

(b) "Buyer" or "retail buyer" means any individual who buys consumer goods from a person engaged in the business of manufacturing, distributing, or selling consumer goods at retail. As used in this subdivision, "person" means any individual, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, association, or other legal entity that engages in any of these businesses.

(c) "Clothing" means any wearing apparel, worn for any purpose, including under and outer garments, shoes, and accessories composed primarily of woven material, natural or synthetic yarn, fiber, or leather or similar fabric.

(d) "Consumables" means any product that is intended for consumption by individuals, or use by individuals for purposes of personal care or in the performance of services ordinarily rendered within the household, and that usually is consumed or expended in the course of consumption or use.

(e) "Distributor" means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal relationship that stands between the manufacturer and the retail seller in purchases, consignments, or contracts for sale of consumer goods.

(f) "Independent repair or service facility" or "independent service dealer" means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity, not an employee or subsidiary of a manufacturer or distributor, that engages in the business of servicing and repairing consumer goods.

(g) "Lease" means any contract for the lease or bailment for the use of consumer goods by an individual, for a term exceeding four months, primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, whether or not it is agreed that the lessee bears the risk of the consumer goods' depreciation.

(h) "Lessee" means an individual who leases consumer goods under a lease.

(i) "Lessor" means a person who regularly leases consumer goods under a lease.

(j) "Manufacturer" means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal relationship that manufactures, assembles, or produces consumer goods.

(k) "Place of business" means, for the purposes of any retail seller that sells consumer goods by catalog or mail order, the distribution point for consumer goods.

(l) "Retail seller," "seller," or "retailer" means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal relationship that engages in the business of selling or leasing consumer goods to retail buyers.

(m) "Return to the retail seller" means, for the purposes of any retail seller that sells consumer goods by catalog or mail order, the retail seller's place of business, as defined in subdivision (k).

(n) "Sale" means either of the following:

(1) The passing of title from the seller to the buyer for a price.

(2) A consignment for sale.

(o) "Service contract" means a contract in writing to perform, over a fixed period of time or for a specified duration, services relating to the maintenance or repair of a consumer product, except that this term does not include a policy of automobile insurance, as defined in Section 116 of the Insurance Code.

(p) "Assistive device" means any instrument, apparatus, or contrivance, including any component or part thereof or accessory thereto, that is used or intended to be used, to assist an individual with a disability in the mitigation or treatment of an injury or disease or to assist or affect or replace the structure or any function of the body of an individual with a disability, except that this term does not include prescriptive lenses and other ophthalmic goods unless they are sold or dispensed to a blind person, as defined in Section 19153 of the Welfare and Institutions Code and unless they are intended to assist the limited vision of the person so disabled.

(q) "Catalog or similar sale" means a sale in which neither the seller nor any employee or agent of the seller nor any person related to the seller nor any person with a financial interest in the sale participates in the diagnosis of the buyer's condition or in the selection or fitting of the device.

(r) "Home appliance" means any refrigerator, freezer, range, microwave oven, washer, dryer, dishwasher, garbage disposal, trash compactor, or room air-conditioner normally used or sold for personal, family, or household purposes.

(s) "Home electronic product" means any television, radio, antenna rotator, audio or video recorder or playback equipment, video camera, video game, video monitor, computer equipment, telephone, telecommunications equipment, electronic alarm system, electronic appliance control system, or other kind of electronic product, if it is normally used or sold for personal, family, or household purposes. The term includes any electronic accessory that is normally used or sold with a home electronic product for one of those purposes. The term excludes any single product with a wholesale price to the retail seller of less than fifty dollars (\$50).

(t) "Member of the Armed Forces" means a person on full-time active duty in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, National Guard, Space Force, or Coast Guard. Full-time active duty shall also include active military service at a military service school designated by law or the Adjutant General of the Military Department concerned.

(u) "Clear and conspicuous" and "clearly and conspicuously" means a larger type than the surrounding text, or in a contrasting type, font, or color to the surrounding text of the same size, or set off from the surrounding text of the same size by symbols or other marks, in a manner that clearly calls attention to the language. For an audio disclosure, "clear and conspicuous" and "clearly and conspicuously" means in a volume and cadence sufficient to be readily audible and understandable.

(v) "Motor home" has the same meaning as defined in Section 1793.22.

(w) "Mobilehome" means a vehicle as defined in Section 18008 of the Health and Safety Code.

(x) "Travel trailer" means a vehicular unit without motive power that is designed to be towed or carried by a motor vehicle. "Travel trailer" does not include a mobilehome.

SEC. 2. Section 1793.2 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1793.2. (a) Every manufacturer of consumer goods sold in this state and for which the manufacturer has made an express warranty shall:

(1) (A) Maintain in this state sufficient service and repair facilities reasonably close to all areas where its consumer goods are sold to carry out the terms of those warranties or designate and authorize in this state as service and repair facilities independent repair or service facilities reasonably close to all areas where its consumer goods are sold to carry out the terms of the warranties.

(B) As a means of complying with this paragraph, a manufacturer may enter into warranty service contracts with independent service and repair facilities. The warranty service contracts may provide for a fixed schedule of rates to be charged for warranty service or warranty repair work. However, the rates fixed by those contracts shall be in conformity with the requirements of subdivision (c) of Section 1793.3. The rates established pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 1793.3, between the manufacturer and the independent service and repair facility, do not preclude a good faith discount that is reasonably related to reduced credit and general overhead cost factors arising from the manufacturer's payment of warranty charges direct to the independent service and repair facility. The warranty service contracts authorized by this paragraph may not be executed to cover a period of time in excess of one year, and may be renewed only by a separate, new contract or letter of agreement between the manufacturer and the independent service and repair facility.

(2) In the event of a failure to comply with paragraph (1), be subject to Section 1793.5.

(3) Make available to authorized service and repair facilities sufficient service literature and replacement parts to effect repairs during the express warranty period.

(b) Where those service and repair facilities are maintained in this state and service or repair of the goods is necessary because they do not conform with the applicable express warranties, service and repair shall be commenced within a reasonable time by the manufacturer or its representative in this state. Unless the buyer agrees in writing to the contrary, the goods shall be serviced or repaired so as to conform to the applicable warranties within 30 days. Delay caused by conditions beyond the control of the manufacturer or its representatives shall serve to extend this 30-day requirement. Where delay arises, conforming goods shall be tendered as soon as possible following termination of the condition giving rise to the delay.

(c) The buyer shall deliver nonconforming goods to the manufacturer's service and repair facility within this state, unless, due to reasons of size and weight, or method of attachment, or method of installation, or nature of the nonconformity, delivery cannot reasonably be accomplished. If the buyer cannot return the nonconforming goods for any of these reasons, the buyer shall notify the manufacturer or its nearest service and repair facility within the state. Written notice of nonconformity to the manufacturer or its service and repair facility shall constitute return of the goods for purposes of this section. Upon receipt of that notice of nonconformity, the manufacturer shall, at its option, service or repair the goods at the buyer's residence, or pick up the goods for service and repair, or arrange for transporting the goods to its service and repair facility. All reasonable costs of transporting the goods when a buyer cannot return them for any of the above reasons shall be at the manufacturer's expense. The reasonable costs of transporting nonconforming goods after delivery to the service and repair facility until return of the goods to the buyer shall be at the manufacturer's expense.

(d) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), if the manufacturer or its representative in this state does not service or repair the goods to conform to the applicable express warranties after a reasonable number of attempts, the manufacturer shall either replace the goods or reimburse the buyer in an amount equal to the purchase price paid by the buyer, less that amount directly attributable to use by the buyer prior to the discovery of the nonconformity. However, if the manufacturer or its representative in this state does not service or repair a travel trailer or a portion of a motor home designed, used, or maintained for human habitation, to conform to the applicable express warranties after a reasonable number of attempts, the buyer shall be free to elect reimbursement in lieu of replacement, and in no event shall the buyer be required by the manufacturer to accept a replacement travel trailer or motor home.

(2) If the manufacturer or its representative in this state is unable to service or repair a new motor vehicle, as that term is defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (e) of Section 1793.22, to conform to the applicable express warranties after a reasonable number of attempts, the manufacturer shall either promptly replace the new motor vehicle in accordance with subparagraph (A) or promptly make restitution to the buyer in accordance with subparagraph (B). However, the buyer shall be free to elect restitution in lieu of replacement, and in no event shall the buyer be required by the manufacturer to accept a replacement vehicle.

(A) In the case of replacement, the manufacturer shall replace the buyer's vehicle with a new motor vehicle substantially identical to the vehicle replaced. The replacement vehicle shall be accompanied by all express and implied warranties that normally accompany new motor vehicles of that specific kind. The manufacturer also shall pay for, or to, the buyer the amount of any sales or use tax, license fees, registration fees, and other official fees which the buyer is obligated to pay in connection with the replacement, plus any incidental damages to which the buyer is entitled under Section 1794, including, but not limited to, reasonable repair, towing, and rental car costs actually incurred by the buyer.

(B) In the case of restitution, the manufacturer shall make restitution in an amount equal to the actual price paid or payable by the buyer, including any charges for transportation and manufacturer-installed options, but excluding nonmanufacturer items installed by a dealer or the buyer, and including any collateral charges such as sales or use tax, license fees, registration fees, and other official fees, plus any incidental damages to which the buyer is entitled under Section 1794, including, but not limited to, reasonable repair, towing, and rental car costs actually incurred by the buyer.

(C) When the manufacturer replaces the new motor vehicle pursuant to subparagraph (A), the buyer shall only be liable to pay the manufacturer an amount directly attributable to use by the buyer of the replaced vehicle prior to the time the buyer first delivered the vehicle to the manufacturer or distributor, or its authorized service and repair facility for correction of the problem that gave rise to the nonconformity. When restitution is made pursuant to subparagraph (B), the amount to be paid by the manufacturer to the buyer may be reduced by the manufacturer by that amount directly attributable to use by the buyer prior to the time the buyer first delivered the vehicle to the manufacturer or distributor, or its authorized service and repair facility for correction of the problem that gave rise to the nonconformity. The amount directly attributable to use by the buyer shall be determined by multiplying the actual price of the new motor vehicle paid or payable by the buyer, including any charges for transportation and manufacturer-installed options, by a fraction having as its denominator 120,000 and having as its numerator the number of miles traveled by the new motor vehicle prior to the time the buyer first delivered the vehicle to the manufacturer or distributor, or its authorized service and repair facility for correction of the problem that gave rise to the nonconformity. Nothing in this paragraph shall in any way limit the rights or remedies available to the buyer under any other law.

(D) Pursuant to Section 1795.4, a buyer of a new motor vehicle shall also include a lessee of a new motor vehicle.

(e) (1) If the goods cannot practicably be serviced or repaired by the manufacturer or its representative to conform to the applicable express warranties because of the method of installation or because the goods have become so affixed to real property as to become a part thereof, the manufacturer shall either replace and install the goods or reimburse the buyer in an amount equal to the purchase price paid by the buyer, including installation costs, less that amount directly attributable to use by the buyer prior to the discovery of the nonconformity.

(2) With respect to claims arising out of deficiencies in the construction of a new residential dwelling, paragraph (1) shall not apply to either of the following:

(A) A product that is not a manufactured product, as defined in subdivision (g) of Section 896.

(B) A claim against a person or entity that is not the manufacturer that originally made the express warranty for that manufactured product.