

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

(PREFILED)

January 7, 2009

Introduced by Sen. KRUGER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Consumer Protection

AN ACT to amend the general business law, in relation to the honest use of refund and rebate forms act

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. The general business law is amended by adding a new article
2 39-DDD to read as follows:

3 ARTICLE 39-DDD

4 HONEST USE OF REFUND AND REBATE FORMS ACT

5 SECTION 898. SHORT TITLE.

6 898-A. DEFINITIONS.

7 898-B. DISPLAY OF EXPIRED MANUFACTURER'S REFUND AND REBATE FORMS
8 PROHIBITED.

9 898-C. AVAILABILITY OF MANUFACTURER'S REFUND OR REBATE FORMS.

10 898-D. PENALTIES.

11 898-E. AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES.

12 S 898. SHORT TITLE. THIS ARTICLE SHALL BE KNOWN AND MAY BE CITED AS
13 THE "HONEST USE OF REFUND AND REBATE FORMS ACT".

14 S 898-A. DEFINITIONS. WHENEVER USED IN THIS ARTICLE:

15 (A) "MANUFACTURER'S REFUND" SHALL MEAN A RETURN OF THE TOTAL PURCHASE
16 PRICE BY A MANUFACTURER TO A PURCHASER OF AN ITEM.

17 (B) "MANUFACTURER'S REBATE" SHALL MEAN A RETURN BY A MANUFACTURER TO A
18 PURCHASER OF AN ITEM OF ANY PORTION OF THE SALES PRICE OR OF A SPECIFIC
19 MONETARY AMOUNT.

20 (C) "FORM" SHALL MEAN THE AUTHORIZED FORM REQUIRED TO BE COMPLETED BY
21 THE PURCHASER OF AN ITEM AS A PREREQUISITE TO A MANUFACTURER'S REFUND OR
22 REBATE.

23 S 898-B. DISPLAY OF EXPIRED MANUFACTURER'S REFUND AND REBATE FORMS
24 PROHIBITED. (A) IT SHALL BE UNLAWFUL FOR ANY PERSON, FIRM, PARTNERSHIP,

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

1 CORPORATION OR ASSOCIATION: (I) TO CAUSE TO BE ADVERTISED BY MEANS OF A
2 NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT, CIRCULAR, TELEVISION OR RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT,
3 OFF-THE-PREMISES PROMOTION OR OTHERWISE, THE AVAILABILITY OF; OR (II) TO
4 DISPLAY, PROMOTE OR DISTRIBUTE WITHIN THE PREMISES OF A RETAIL STORE OR
5 OTHERWISE MAKE AVAILABLE THEREIN; ANY MANUFACTURER'S REFUND OR REBATE
6 FORM WHICH HAS EXPIRED AND WHICH WILL NOT BE HONORED BY THE MANUFACTURER
7 AS A RESULT OF SUCH EXPIRATION.

8 (B) THE PROVISIONS OF SUBDIVISION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL NOT APPLY
9 TO FORMS POSTED ON A BULLETIN BOARD NEAR A STORE ENTRANCE, PROVIDED THAT
10 SUCH PERSON, FIRM, PARTNERSHIP, CORPORATION OR ASSOCIATION CONSPICUOUSLY
11 POSTS AND MAINTAINS A PROMINENT SIGN ADJACENT TO THE BULLETIN BOARD,
12 CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING LEGEND IN CAPITAL LETTERS IN BOLD PRINT WITH A
13 CONTRASTING BACKGROUND OF AT LEAST EIGHT-POINT TYPE: "PLEASE NOTE: THIS
14 STORE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPIRED REFUND OR REBATE OFFERS POSTED
15 HERE. PLEASE CHECK THE EXPIRATION DATE ON YOUR FORM." IN THE ABSENCE OF
16 THE REQUIRED SIGN, THE PROVISIONS OF SUBDIVISION (A) OF THIS SECTION
17 SHALL APPLY TO ALL REFUND OR REBATE OFFERS POSTED ON SUCH A BULLETIN
18 BOARD.

19 (C) THE PROVISIONS OF SUBDIVISION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL NOT APPLY
20 TO REFUND OR REBATE FORMS WHICH ARE PRINTED ON OR CONTAINED WHOLLY WITH-
21 IN PACKAGES, OR WHICH ARE CONTAINED ON THE INSIDE OF PRODUCT LABELS OR
22 OTHERWISE ARE NOT READILY VISIBLE TO THE CONSUMER, PROVIDED THAT THE
23 AVAILABILITY OF A REFUND OR REBATE FORM IS NOT OTHERWISE ADVERTISED ON
24 THE PACKAGE. IF THE AVAILABILITY OF A REFUND OR REBATE FORM IS OTHERWISE
25 ADVERTISED ON THE PACKAGE, THE PROVISIONS OF SUBDIVISION (A) OF THIS
26 SECTION SHALL APPLY; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT WHEN THE REFUND OR REBATE
27 FORMS PRINTED ON OR CONTAINED WHOLLY WITHIN PACKAGES HAVE EXPIRED, A
28 RETAILER MAY POST A SHELF SIGN OR SIGNS AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE ITEM
29 OR ITEMS INDICATING THAT SUCH REFUND OR REBATE FORMS HAVE EXPIRED. SUCH
30 RETAILER SHALL NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR THE PENALTIES PRESCRIBED IN
31 SECTION EIGHT HUNDRED NINETY-EIGHT-D OF THIS ARTICLE IF SUCH SIGN OR
32 SIGNS HAVE BEEN POSTED IN CONFORMANCE WITH THIS SECTION.

33 S 898-C. AVAILABILITY OF MANUFACTURER'S REFUND OR REBATE FORMS. (A)
34 ANY PERSON, FIRM, PARTNERSHIP, CORPORATION OR ASSOCIATION: (I) WHICH
35 CAUSES TO BE ADVERTISED BY MEANS OF A NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT, CIRCULAR,
36 TELEVISION OR RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT OR OFF-THE-PREMISES PROMOTION OR OTHER-
37 WISE, THE AVAILABILITY OF; OR (II) WHICH DISPLAYS, PROMOTES OR DISTRIB-
38 UTES WITHIN THE PREMISES OF A RETAIL STORE OR OTHERWISE MAKES AVAILABLE
39 THEREIN; A MANUFACTURER'S REFUND OR REBATE FORM SHALL MAKE AVAILABLE THE
40 APPROPRIATE MANUFACTURER'S REFUND OR REBATE FORM TO THE PURCHASER AT THE
41 TIME OF SALE.

42 (B) THE SELLER MAY, AT ITS DISCRETION, OFFER A SUBSTITUTE TO THE
43 PURCHASER EXCEPT THAT THE SUBSTITUTE SHALL NOT BE A SUBSTITUTE REFUND OR
44 REBATE FORM UNLESS THE USE OF SUCH FORMS IS AUTHORIZED BY THE MANUFAC-
45 Turer. IF THE SUBSTITUTE IS SATISFACTORY TO THE PURCHASER, THE SELLER'S
46 OBLIGATIONS PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ARTICLE SHALL BE DEEMED
47 TO BE FULFILLED.

48 S 898-D. PENALTIES. (A) ANY VIOLATION OF A PROVISION OF SECTION EIGHT
49 HUNDRED NINETY-EIGHT-B OR EIGHT HUNDRED NINETY-EIGHT-C OF THIS ARTICLE
50 SHALL BE SUBJECT TO A CIVIL PENALTY OF NOT LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS
51 AND NOT MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS.

52 (B) FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE UNLAWFUL DISPLAY OF A GROUP
53 OF IDENTICAL REFUND OR REBATE FORMS SHALL CONSTITUTE BUT A SINGLE
54 VIOLATION, AND THE UNLAWFUL DISPLAY OF DIFFERENT GROUPS OF IDENTICAL
55 REFUND OR REBATE FORMS SHALL CONSTITUTE A SEPARATE VIOLATION FOR EACH
56 GROUP SO DISPLAYED.

1 S 898-E. AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES. IT SHALL BE AN AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE TO A
2 VIOLATION OF SECTION EIGHT HUNDRED NINETY-EIGHT-C OF THIS ARTICLE IF:
3 (A) THE SELLER CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT HE OR SHE HAD AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF
4 REFUND OR REBATE FORMS SUFFICIENT TO MEET REASONABLY ANTICIPATED NEEDS
5 FOR SUCH FORMS DURING THE PARTICULAR OFFER; OR (B) THE MANUFACTURER CAN
6 DEMONSTRATE THAT AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF REFUND OR REBATE FORMS SUFFICIENT
7 TO MEET REASONABLY ANTICIPATED NEEDS FOR SUCH FORMS DURING THE PARTIC-
8 ULAR OFFER WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO SELLERS PARTICIPATING IN SUCH OFFER.
9 S 2. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
10 have become a law.