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### **Pilot Program for Lemon Law Cases Extended**

The Judiciary's Lemon Law Pilot Program has been extended for another two years, today announced Jane Castner, assistant director of the Civil Practice Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Implemented in January 2006, the pilot program allows the parties in lemon law cases under N.J.S.A. 56:12-29 to choose one of three complementary dispute resolution (CDR) techniques to use in resolving their dispute. The available techniques are mediation, arbitration and voluntary binding arbitration. In mediation, a trained mediator with expertise in lemon law cases facilitates negotiations between the parties in order to reach a mutually acceptable settlement. In arbitration, the dispute is heard by either one or two experienced arbitrators who then make a non-binding decision, usually on the same day the case is heard. In voluntary binding arbitration, the parties sign a written agreement to abide by the decision of a two-member arbitration panel. A retired Superior Court judge also hears the case, but only becomes involved if the arbitrators do not agree.

"The Lemon Law Pilot Program offers attorneys and litigants options for resolving their disputes according to the needs of their individual case, rather than imposing a single model onto all cases," said Castner.

The New Jersey Supreme Court approved the extension of the program based on data gathered during the initial year of the pilot. Because data from the first year showed an overwhelming preference for non-binding arbitration over mediation, the Court also approved a proposal to switch to arbitration as the default method for resolving lemon law cases where the parties have declined to choose one of the three available techniques.

"The appeal of arbitration stems from the fact that it occurs after the vehicle inspection is complete and the value of the case is determined, so the parties have a better idea of where they stand and what they might expect," explained Castner.

A [booklet](#) describing each of the types of dispute resolution and the situations for which they may be appropriate is available in hard copy and on the Judiciary Web site at [njcourtonline.com](http://njcourtonline.com).

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