

14 Million Unrepaired Recalls Meet a \$31,548 Used-Car Market in 2026

Easy Lemon analysis finds that tariff cost pressure and stalled recall completion rate have increased the value of 2026 vehicle buybacks under the Lemon Laws.

MANHASSET, NY, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Tariffs, parts-supply delays, and an unprecedented backlog of unrepaired recalls have changed the financial math behind state lemon law cases, according to Easy Lemon, a consumer protection firm. Internal firm data and

public reports from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), CBT News, Edmunds, and S&P Global Mobility indicate that a 2026 vehicle buyback now returns materially more dollars to a consumer than a comparable buyback two years ago. The firm released the

analysis to highlight a window in which consumers with defective or recalled vehicles may be uniquely positioned to recover..

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The math has changed. A 2026 buyback is worth more because the replacement vehicle costs more and repair parts are harder to source.”

Steven Nassi, Esq., Founder of Easy Lemon

The pattern reflects two converging trends. Replacement vehicles cost more because tariffs and parts inflation have lifted both new and used prices. Recalled vehicles increasingly remain on the road for months past their initial defect notice as dealerships experience delays in obtaining repair parts. The intersection of those two forces has shifted the dollar economics of a buyback claim in the

consumer’s favor.

Tariffs and Parts Inflation Have Increased Replacement-Vehicle Costs

A CBT News review of the 2025–2026 tariff regime pegs the added cost to the U.S. auto industry



at roughly \$30 billion. The figure captures duties on imported finished vehicles, imported components used in domestic assembly, and the cascading cost of parts that cross the border multiple times before reaching a dealer or a service bay.

The repair side carries its own bill. S&P Global Mobility's 2026 aftermarket-industry review documents a separate \$22.4 billion in added aftermarket parts duties, with 47% of U.S. parts imports originating in Mexico. That mix is producing a 5% to 6% revenue impact on repair operations across the country, increasing the cost to source replacement parts for any vehicle that needs them.



Lemon Law Manufacturer buyback

Edmunds' Q1 2026 used-car report values the average three-year-old used vehicle at an average of \$31,548, the second-highest first-quarter figure on record. A [lemon law buyback](#) calculation, which subtracts a mileage offset typically running 5% to 15% of the purchase price, now sits against a far higher replacement cost as compared to 2024.

Recall completion has lagged as parts back up

NHTSA's 2025 Annual Recalls Report, published in March 2026, logs 670 total recall campaigns: 447 mandated and 223 voluntary, covering more than 28 million vehicles. Software and electronics drove 119 campaigns affecting 8.19 million vehicles; powertrain issues accounted for 87 campaigns and 7.99 million vehicles.

Completion is the lagging indicator. By February 2026, the repair completion rate stood at 50.3%, leaving an estimated 14 million recalled vehicles still unrepaired. The NHTSA 2025 Recall Completion Rates Report explicitly attributes the suppressed completion figure to parts shortages and supply-chain delays; the same supply pressures the CBT News and S&P Global Mobility data document on the cost side.

Two Trends, One Financial Result for Consumers

For a consumer with a vehicle that keeps returning to the service bay or sitting under a stop-sale order, the practical result is a buyback measured against a more expensive replacement market. A 2024-purchased SUV with a stalled software fix cannot simply be swapped for the same model at the same price; the comparable 2026 vehicle costs thousands more, and the parts needed to repair the original defect may not arrive for months. Buyback formulas tied to the original purchase price, less a modest usage offset, return a larger real-dollar outcome to a consumer

who would otherwise absorb the depreciation hit while waiting on a fix that the supply chain may not deliver.

The Firm Caseload Reflects the Same Pattern

The firm's [vehicle recalls](#) dashboard, drawing on NHTSA campaign data and Cox Automotive and CleanTechnica unit-sales totals, indicates the 2025 electric-vehicle recall rate ran 2.84 times higher than the gasoline-vehicle recall rate. Newer EV platforms tend to carry higher replacement comparables, compounding the cost shift documented above.

Recent settlements include \$129,519 on an Audi RS E-Tron claim in Florida, \$113,897 on a GMC Hummer EV case in Pennsylvania, \$110,289 on a Rivian R1T matter in Florida, \$83,401 on a Volkswagen ID. Buzz claim in New Jersey, and \$79,556 on a Kia EV9 case in Texas. The pattern tracks the broader cost shift: electric and recently-priced vehicles carry the highest replacement comparables and the longest parts-supply tails.

Consumers facing a pattern of repeat repair-shop visits, an unresolved recall notification still pending after multiple weeks, or a stop-sale on a recently-purchased vehicle may have a stronger remedy in 2026 than in prior years. State lemon laws and the federal Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act both contemplate manufacturer obligations when defects cannot be repaired within a reasonable number of attempts, with available remedies including vehicle repurchase, replacement, or cash settlement at the manufacturer's expense. Documentation of repair visits, dealer communications, and recall notices typically determines qualification for relief. Easy Lemon's [lemon law lawyers](#) handle qualifying matters under applicable state warranty and federal Magnuson-Moss provisions.

About Easy Lemon

Easy Lemon by RockPoint Law P.C. is a nationwide lemon law firm headquartered in Manhasset, New York, with offices in Dallas, Newark, Miami, and Philadelphia. Founded by Steven Nassi, Esq., the firm represents consumers in vehicle repurchase, replacement, and cash settlement matters under state lemon laws and the federal Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act.

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