

(4) to assist, advise and cooperate with the Better Business Bureaus of the Tri-County Area and local, state and federal agencies and officials to protect and promote the interest of the consumer public;

(5) to assist, develop and conduct programs of consumer education and information through public hearings, meetings, publications or other materials prepared for distribution to the consumer public of the Tri-County Area;

(6) to undertake activities to encourage local business and industry to maintain high standards of honesty, fair business practices and public responsibility in the production, promotion and sale of consumer goods and services and in the extension of credit;

(7) to exercise and perform such other functions and duties consistent with the purposes or provisions of this subtitle which may be deemed necessary or appropriate to protect and promote the welfare of county consumers;

(8) to render annual reports as to the number of complaints filed, the nature thereof and the disposition thereof and the other relevant activities of the board undertaken during the previous year to the Tri-County Council.

(q) Same; complaints filed. Any consumer subjected to an unlawful, unfair or deceptive trade practice may file a complaint with the board in writing stating the name and address of the person alleged to have committed the particular trade practice and any other information required by the board.

(r) Same; investigations, conciliation, penalties.
(1) Upon the filing of a complaint the board shall make any investigation it deems appropriate to ascertain facts and issues. Whenever appropriate the Board shall refer a complaint to the State Consumer Protection Division of the State Attorney General's office or to the Federal Trade Commission. If the board determines there are reasonable grounds to believe an unlawful, unfair or deceptive trade practice has occurred, it shall attempt to conciliate the matter by methods of initial conference and persuasion with all interested parties and any representatives as the parties may choose to assist them. Conciliation conferences shall be informal and not public.

(2) the terms of conciliation agreed to by the parties may be reduced to writing and incorporated into a written assurance of discontinuance or settlement agreement to be signed by the parties, which written assurance or agreement is for conciliation purposes only and does not constitute an admission by any party that