

**§ 18B-1309. Mediation at direction of Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission.**

If a dispute arises between a wholesaler and supplier under this Article, and such dispute appears likely to lead to litigation, the Commission, upon request of any party or on its own initiative, may require the parties to participate in mediation in an effort to resolve the dispute. This authority shall be in addition to the Commission's authority to issue declaratory rulings pursuant to G.S. 150B-4. The Commission may designate the mediator, in which case the Commission shall pay the mediator's fee, or the Commission may direct the parties to agree upon and share the costs of a mediator. If the parties then cannot agree upon a mediator, the Commission shall designate the mediator, and the fees shall be divided evenly by the parties. The Commission shall direct that the mediation be completed within a specified period of time. Except for injunctive relief, no lawsuit or other legal action concerning the dispute may be filed until the mediation is completed and is unsuccessful, unless necessary to avoid expiration of a statute of limitation. (2012-4, s. 1.)