

BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

Proposed FHV Accessibility Rules

Public Hearing: September 28, 2017

September 22, 2017

TO:

New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission
Commissioner and Chair Meera Joshi
Commissioner Nora Marino
Commissioner Lauvienska Polanco
Commissioner Kenneth Mitchell
Commissioner Tom Sorrentino
Commissioner Bill Aguado
Commissioner Jacques Jiha

Dear Chair Joshi and Commissioners:

I am the owner of _____ . I am writing to state my position that the proposed rules concerning wheelchair accessibility is an arbitrary directive that has no basis for support. The TLC's proposal would capriciously require 25% of all trips be completed by a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle ("WAV"), including trips where a customer has not requested such a vehicle and for trips where the customer does not have any use for such a vehicle. How would you feel if you were a customer who called my base and requested a sedan and instead, a minivan that is wheelchair accessible was sent to you? Not providing our customers with what they want will surely cause my base to lose business, thus putting drivers out of work and reducing the choices available to the riding public.

Also, where did the 25% requirement come from? Was that a number that was picked out of a hat or was it based upon some study or review of data as it applies to the needs of the disabled community in New York City. I wholeheartedly support a policy that would dispatch a WAV to any New Yorker who requests one, but such a policy will only work if the focus is on those passengers who request a WAV and such vehicles should be prioritized for those passengers.

I believe that the means to achieving the best results requires the for-hire vehicle industry to do what it does best, which is dispatching vehicles to passengers upon request. I have recently been informed that the Livery Round Table, Inc. ("LRT") and other leaders of the for-hire vehicle industry have proposed an alternate solution to the problem that involves the creation and operation of a WAV Central Dispatch Program. It is my understanding that this program would be entirely funded through the industry and will be dedicated to providing high quality service to people who need such vehicles. It is also my understanding that the industry leaders proposed a solution to you that would be built around passengers who request a WAV and that such service would be provided in a much more effective manner than the arbitrary 25% requirement that the TLC seeking to impose. I support and believe that an industry-wide investment into a central dispatch entity would surely help ensure WAV service in the FHV sector all while providing quality service to all New Yorkers.

I have just recently found out about some of the details that the LRT and other industry leaders proposed, but I would like to hear more before the TLC rushes to regulate without considering the other solution proposed by the industry. With all due respect, I believe that the TLC's proposal is not workable and is unable to be complied with. On the other hand, from what I have heard thus far, the solution the industry is proposing is one that will provide persons those who need WAVs with the service they need and deserve. I believe the TLC's solution is one that will destroy the industry.

I have been informed that the LRT and other industry leaders have asked you to postpone the public hearing scheduled for September 28, 2017, but you have refused to do so. I simply cannot understand why you would not agree to postpone this hearing so as to allow myself, other members of the industry and those most impacted by the ultimate outcome an opportunity to work together without the threat of unreasonable regulations hanging over our heads. Also, don't you think that the other TLC Commissioners should be afforded the opportunity to consider the merits of the solution proposed by the industry, instead of being forced to consider only the arbitrary 25% mandate alone. If you are interested in having a genuine discussion, then you will postpone the hearing and allow all parties to come together to discuss the merits of the Central Dispatch proposal made by the industry.

I understand the framework of the solution proposed by the industry and believe it is rational and makes sense. On the other hand, the TLC's proposal makes no sense to me, seems as if an arbitrary number (percentage) was chosen and is now being forced down the throats of the industry. Why is there such a rush to hold a public hearing and impose these unduly burdensome regulations before considering all reasonable alternatives. This is not the way I thought our government was supposed to work. I understand that it is your job to regulate the industry, but it is our job to enable the riding public to obtain the transportation they need. The TLC's proposal will destroy the industry and will never be able to meet the TLC's stated goals. I would hope that you would give us all time to work this issue out in an amicable fashion rather than forcing us into a corner to provide a service that, under the current circumstances, simply cannot be provided. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,
