

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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DEPARTMENT OF FOR-HIRE VEHICLES

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PUBLIC HEARING ON LOITERING

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WEDNESDAY,
AUGUST 9, 2017

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The Public Hearing was held in Suite
2032, 2235 Shannon Place, SE, Washington, DC, at
10:00 a.m., Ernest Chrappah, Director, presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

ERNEST CHRAPPAH, Director
DOTTI LOVE WADE, Member, Advisory Council

STAFF PRESENT:

JUANDA MIXON, Secretary to the Council
ERIC AMPEDU, Administrator, Compliance and
Enforcement
JACQUES LERNER, ESQ., Senior Policy Advisor

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2 (10:15 a.m.)

3 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Good morning and
4 welcome to the public hearing on loitering. My
5 name is Ernest Chrappah, Director of the D.C.
6 Department of For-Hire Vehicles. We are located
7 in hearing room 2032 at 2235 Shannon Place, SE,
8 Washington, DC. Today is Wednesday, August 9,
9 2017, and the time is 10:15.

10 As usual and customary, I will ask for
11 you all to join me in observing a moment of
12 silence for those who departed.

13 (Moment of silence.)

14 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you. By way
15 of introduction, I am joined today at the podium
16 by Commissioner Dotti Love Wade. Welcome, good
17 to see you. And also Jacques Lerner, Senior
18 Policy Advisor.

19 The vehicle-for-hire industry has
20 grown rapidly over the last five years and
21 improved the way our residents and visitors move
22 from point A to point B within the city.

1 We have lots of actions today
2 including taxis, ride sharing, black cars, and
3 limousines. The industry today is better than it
4 was several years ago. What came along with the
5 growth in the industry is a bigger pool of for-
6 hire vehicles that can work in DC.

7 Five years ago the industry had less
8 than 15,000 cars on the road. But today, the
9 industry has an estimated 185,000 of which 94
10 percent are registered private vehicles for hire.
11 Sixty-one hundred approximately are licensed
12 taxis and 400 licensed vehicles.

13 Over the last five years, we have also
14 seen an increase in loitering. Data published on
15 our website for the last two years shows
16 loitering as the biggest category of tickets
17 issued against for-hire operators.

18 Recently we have been hearing from
19 businesses and residents about how loitering
20 negatively impacts them. So today, we want to
21 open a dialogue. We want to find a new and
22 practical approach to dealing with industry

1 issues.

2 We will start off with a staff
3 presentation and then hear from various staff
4 speakers. No final decisions have been made.
5 There has not been any change in the law. There
6 has not been any change in the regulation.

7 We are hopeful that by having this
8 dialogue, we will have a better and a more
9 practical approach to informing our policy making
10 so that we continue to make for-hire vehicle
11 services available to our residents and visitors
12 and drivers can have expanded economic
13 opportunities that has come along with the growth
14 in the industry.

15 The staff presentation will be made by
16 Eric Ampedu. He is the administrator of our
17 Compliance and Enforcement Division. With that
18 being said, Eric, please.

19 MR. AMPEDU: Thank you, sir. Good
20 morning, ladies and gentleman. I want to welcome
21 you all to this hearing today and I'm privileged
22 and very glad to be here. And this conversation

1 about loitering cannot be underestimated. I
2 think it is a conversation that has been waiting
3 to happen and we all see what goes on in the
4 city.

5 This is always described as a growing
6 city and I am not sure when it is going to stop
7 growing, but any city that has a lot of cranes,
8 when you look out there you see a lot of cranes
9 up and see the road network is always under
10 construction, is a growing city.

11 I don't know how many of you have been
12 to Rome before, but there are cities in the world
13 that do not grow anymore because, you know,
14 everything is done and there's no piece of land
15 to develop.

16 But in D.C., the city continues to
17 grow, and the influx of people in D.C. is
18 amazing. Having said that, I think that the
19 reason why we are seeing a lot of vehicles on our
20 roads is because the city is growing and we all
21 appreciate that.

22 And we are here today to talk about

1 how we can manage loitering which has become a
2 severe problem in the city. Not only for
3 businesses but for all our stakeholders, and we
4 are happy to have you all here today.

5 So with that being said, we'll go into
6 the presentation. The regulatory definition of
7 loitering. I want you all to read it. We can no
8 longer continue to adhere strictly to that
9 because if we do, it will create a lot of issues
10 for us and for you.

11 So DFHV has decided to come up with a
12 more practical and more realistic approach to how
13 we deal with loitering in the city. The Director
14 has already given the stats about how many
15 vehicles we have on the road and who knows, it
16 could be more.

17 So the problem cannot be
18 underestimated. Now the DFHV definition or the
19 approach that the DFHV has decided to take is a
20 little different from the regulatory definition
21 of loitering.

22 And I want to place the emphasis on

1 the latter part of this definition which states
2 unless a vehicle is legally parked and not
3 impeding vehicular or pedestrian traffic. While
4 cruising, a vehicle for hire shall not stop
5 except to take on or discharge a passenger.

6 That's the crux of what we want to
7 talk about. And you all agree that that's a very
8 challenging issue because, you know, as we know,
9 the for-hire industry, like we said, it has grown
10 and it's still growing.

11 And sometimes the challenge is, you
12 know, when they are picking up or dropping off,
13 they've got to stop. They can't keep driving or
14 cruising while they pick up or drop off. And
15 that's where essentially the loitering comes into
16 play.

17 We did an investigation of three days
18 with our evening tour. When I say that, I'm
19 talking about our vehicular inspection officers
20 are going out there and managing the situation
21 and, you know, ensuring that our drivers are in
22 compliance with our regulations.

1 And we worked on 100 vehicles with our
2 current definition of, when I say current, I mean
3 the regulatory definition of loitering. And we
4 found out that, you know, the private vehicles
5 for-hire were the largest group of violators of
6 infractions in terms of loitering.

7 That's not to say the private vehicles
8 for-hire are the only ones guilty or maybe that
9 violates this regulations, but they were the
10 majority.

11 And we also want to let you know that
12 DFHV currently has an embargo on tickets or NOIs
13 for loitering. So if your drivers inform you
14 they don't receive tickets or they receive is
15 probably warnings, and the goal with that is to
16 keep moving the city along.

17 Because if we do not do that, you
18 know, the city will come to a standstill and we
19 don't want that. So there are several locations
20 in the city that are identified as the most
21 notorious areas of locations for loitering.

22 And as you may all know, some parts of

1 the city engage in more activities than others in
2 terms of night life and what goes on generally
3 over the weekends, especially from Thursday
4 through Saturday night.

5 And these areas have been identified.
6 These locations have been identified as the most
7 places that loitering occurs. And so one of the
8 things we can do to resolve that is to make sure
9 that our officers are present in this locations
10 to make sure that we moving the city along.

11 Okay. So as you can, 14th street. We
12 all know that. U Street, Connecticut Avenue, M
13 Street, 18th Street, the Adams Morgan area, and H
14 Street, where the night life is.

15 But the businesses that are impacted
16 by loitering. A lot of businesses are impacted by
17 loitering. Sometimes they benefit from it, other
18 times they don't. But we know that the Downtown
19 BID, Restaurants Associations, restaurants either
20 benefit from it or they do not.

21 Because, you know, the dropping off in
22 this locations and picking up as well. The hotel

1 associations, you know, the Union Station. The
2 National Stadium, we all know gets very crowded,
3 and a lot of loitering goes on during game days
4 over there.

5 Community representatives, ANCs and
6 community groups such as the Cleveland Park and
7 Adams Morgan all are impacted. We can't mention
8 all of them, but these are the most places that
9 are impacted or the most businesses that are
10 impacted by loitering.

11 Okay. I just want to show you some
12 pictures that our enforcement officers have taken
13 while they're on duty, patrolling the city,
14 making sure that the city is moving and not come
15 to a stop.

16 As you can see, it look chaotic. It
17 looks chaotic in this picture. And this is what
18 we are trying to address, ladies and gentlemen.
19 We cannot afford to have the city look like this
20 on any night. It is not good for us. It's not
21 good for our visitors. It's not good for all the
22 stakeholders in this business.

1 As you can see, these vehicles have
2 just stopped in the middle of the street, in the
3 middle of traffic, trying to either drop off or
4 pick up, and again when this happens, the city is
5 not moving.

6 And we want to do something about that
7 and that's why this conversation today is very
8 important. Again, look at that car. Definitely
9 you all know it's not a taxicab. You all know
10 what it is. I mean, just stopped in the middle
11 of traffic.

12 And that impedes traffic, that impedes
13 the flow of both pedestrian and vehicular
14 traffic. Okay. Again moving the city along, I
15 think we, in DFHV, especially the enforcement
16 division, team up with other law enforcement
17 agencies or other civil enforcement groups like
18 DDOT TCOs, who have a certain degree of moving
19 violation authority and work with them, you know,
20 MPD, of course, plays a role in this through move
21 the city along.

22 We want to maintain continuous patrols

1 during times of higher traffic volume in targeted
2 areas or the locations that we identified
3 earlier. And again, our enforcement approach is
4 not to embed in the industry stakeholders, and I
5 mean drivers and owners. We want to approach it
6 cautiously.

7 We have a three-step escalation
8 strategy for enforcement. When we come across,
9 you know, drivers loitering, the first time we
10 try to tell them, hey, keep moving, and we don't
11 issue any tickets. That would be considered a
12 verbal warning.

13 And you know, you come across the same
14 driver doing the same thing, who escalated to a
15 written warning. And of course, at some point,
16 NOI, we'll give a live ticket. But like I said
17 earlier, DFHV or the Director has decided, you
18 know, mandated that we hold off issuing any
19 tickets for loitering for now.

20 I don't know if that's going to change
21 after this conversation, but of course, our
22 officers are very frustrated because, you know,

1 they see the same driver doing the same thing
2 every day, every night.

3 Okay so, these are some of the, you
4 know, just ideas that we have about how we can
5 change, you know, what goes on around loitering
6 that, you know, we can advise our drivers not to
7 stop in, you know, the street car lane.

8 I happen to go out one night, work
9 with my officers, and I was amazed to see, you
10 know, it could be, I think it was. You know, a
11 private, I'm not going to call out any particular
12 private for-hire vehicle, but it was a private
13 for-hire vehicle sitting on the street car lane.

14 The street car was right behind him,
15 honking, and you know, he was just sitting there.
16 When we approached him, he said he was waiting
17 for his customer. We want to try to stop that
18 because that could lead to an accident and
19 anything can happen.

20 So we want to send this caution out
21 that don't stand or stop in the street car lanes.
22 So also do not stop or stand in a moving lane of

1 traffic. As we saw in the pictures earlier,
2 there were cars that just stopped in the middle
3 of the traffic while traffic was still moving.

4 And when that happens, traffic comes
5 to a standstill and that's just not a good thing.
6 So we want you to advise drivers not to or we
7 want to advise drivers not to do that.

8 Also, it's somehow challenging to find
9 a curb to pull up to in certain areas in terms of
10 dropping off and picking up passengers, but
11 that's what we want to advise drivers to do.

12 You know that to mitigate this severe
13 loitering situation that we have. Our partners
14 in this effort, are both law enforcement and
15 civil groups. The law enforcement, we have MPD,
16 U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Park Police, you know,
17 U.S. Secret Service, Metro Police, and Amtrak
18 Police.

19 They all help us or assist in the
20 effort to move the city along and the TCOs, of
21 course, play a role. And also we work with DDOT
22 to put signage where necessary so we can avoid

1 loitering.

2 We also have private partners that we
3 collaborate with such as the Digital Dispatch
4 Service, you know, to send out, we advise them to
5 send out blasts to their drivers to advise them,
6 especially during peak times that, you know,
7 illegal U-turns, and illegal activities in the
8 city are just a recipe for accidents and other
9 unforeseen activities that we don't want to
10 engage in.

11 So it would be a good idea for the DDS
12 to collaborate with us in that capacity. We also
13 work with the, want to work and continue to work
14 with the taxicab companies, associations, and the
15 co-ops to make sure that we are all on the same
16 page and we all meet the expectations that we
17 have of each other.

18 DFHV, we will continue what we do to
19 make sure that we, you know, guide you, provide
20 you with the necessary information that you need
21 to be able to guide your drivers to do the right
22 thing.

1 So our implementation strategy is to
2 collaborate, of course, with industry
3 stakeholders, drivers, and companies. That's why
4 we are all here today. And then we want to
5 educate drivers.

6 Educating drivers is the primary
7 responsibility of the companies and we also know
8 that there are private, you know, drivers, and
9 that's why we do our best to make sure that we
10 put out enough information. We share current
11 information and trends in the industry to enable
12 you to have the knowledge that you have to be
13 able to do what's expected.

14 We also empower the drivers in the
15 industry, assisting them through some of our
16 programs. For instance we have a resource center
17 that opens every Tuesday and Thursdays from 4:30
18 to 6:30. And all drivers are, you know, welcomed
19 to come in and, you know, seek assistance with
20 anything that they need in relation to their job
21 or what we do here at DFHV.

22 And our doors are open from 4:30,

1 again on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Finally, we
2 enforce compliance based on the new definition or
3 approach that we are coming up with and this
4 conversation is actually going to shape how that
5 enforcement, you know, proceeds.

6 But for now, again, like I said, it's
7 a three-step escalation strategy which is the
8 one, verbal warning, written warning, and then
9 NOI.

10 Yes, so again, I just want to
11 emphasize the overview of our implementation
12 strategy. Again, it's written warning, then
13 verbal warning, and then, of course, the NOI
14 comes through at the end. And we also want to
15 say to you all that, you know, we care about your
16 business.

17 We wouldn't be here having this
18 conversation if we do not care. We care about
19 your business, we are partners in the industry.
20 This is an evolving industry that's yet to see
21 more amazing things happen and we want to pledge
22 that we are partners.

1 And then we have, we share
2 responsibilities for the sustainability of this
3 industry. If we don't play our roles equally
4 well, we all know where we are going to end up.
5 So we want to have this kind of conversations so
6 we can all be on the same page.

7 And with that I conclude my
8 presentation. Thank you all very much.

9 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you, Eric.
10 With the presentation completed, we are going to
11 move the second half of today's meeting where we
12 will have a registered speakers present.

13 Madam Secretary, could you go over the
14 procedure for the registered speakers in terms of
15 how much time each person will be given.

16 SECRETARY MIXON: Yes.

17 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: I understand each
18 registered speaker will have five minutes and
19 based on how the meeting flows, if there are some
20 unregistered speakers who would like to provide
21 some feedback, we will consider that as well.

22 And then we will also go to a question

1 and answer session. Commissioner, sorry, I keep
2 saying Commissioner, Advisor Dotti Wade has some
3 questions around the presentation and some other
4 things that we about to hear. So we will cover
5 some time to address those as well.

6 SECRETARY MIXON: So, yes. I'll call
7 your name. If you could go to the podium. I'm
8 going to move it around a little bit, but if you
9 would also sign-in and then once you start
10 speaking, I will start the timer.

11 If you have not finished in five
12 minutes, I respectfully ask you to obey the rules
13 and finish up. I hope everyone who signed up did
14 bring their ten copies of their statements, and
15 then for the ones who are not registered, we will
16 allow you three minutes.

17 So we will start in just one moment.
18 First, Mr. Anthony Dash. Are you present?

19 Anthony Dash.

20 MR. DASH: Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry. I
21 didn't know someone had signed me up. I'm not
22 prepared.

1 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay, that's
2 acceptable. Got your name in error then. That's
3 fine. Okay. Next we have Mr. Larry Frankel.

4 MR. FRANKEL: Thank you. Okay. My
5 name is Larry Frankel. And I guess I start,
6 right?

7 SECRETARY MIXON: Yes.

8 MR. FRANKEL: Okay. First of all, on
9 the presentation, I would like to add just a
10 couple of footnotes for you, sir. The street car
11 lanes are an interesting situation, of course,
12 always will be.

13 Even so several of us testified
14 against the street car situation and parking and
15 letting in and out customers. Nothing was heard,
16 I guess, for the last four or five years. Where
17 do you drop off the customers if you don't have
18 any lane.

19 You can't do it at the corner. You
20 can't do it here. So figure out a way to drop
21 off customers on that street and you might have a
22 little less loitering and a little less problems.

1 Also there is no plan here to bring in
2 the 170,000 rideshare drivers even so you're
3 notifying cabdrivers and cab companies, I don't
4 see Uber or Lyft or the 170 being notified or
5 being brought in here to be told what the law is.

6 They need to know and they're not
7 being notified. But anyway this is my testimony.
8 I appreciate the opportunity that you have
9 provided me by having this open discussion.

10 I have a unique perspective on the
11 laws and regulations that have made loitering so
12 instrumental in harassing and persecuting the
13 taxicab drivers on one hand while leaving the
14 TNCs completely unregulated and abundant.

15 I was chairman of three different
16 driver associations where I represented over
17 7,000 Washington, D.C. professional taxicab
18 drivers between 2008 and 2014. I was in the
19 rooms and backrooms with city council members and
20 industry members as this specific issue was being
21 dealt with.

22 Uber had come to town with their

1 illegal, political, and financial influence.
2 Uber's strategy was to destroy the taxi industry
3 by buying legislation that was not only favorable
4 to Uber but regulations and laws that were
5 unfavorable to the taxi industry.

6 City Council Mary Cheh, who had
7 oversight of the taxicab commission, wrote and
8 implemented unfavorable taxicab legislation I
9 allege based on the illegal influence that she,
10 her staff, and her family enjoyed.

11 Loitering was only a rarely enforced
12 taxicab regulation until Mary Cheh elevated it to
13 a law by legislation strictly to plaque
14 cabdrivers with large fines and inconvenience
15 with no place to wait for fares, made to
16 constantly drive since there were over 7,000
17 taxicabs, but only enough taxicabs stands for 410
18 taxis.

19 Mary Cheh also made sure that the
20 loitering rules were not implemented against Uber
21 or other TNCs. The present horrible condition
22 and issues of the transportation systems in

1 Washington, D.C. show the corrupt influence of
2 big corporation and moronic oversight of Mary
3 Cheh.

4 Uber and the other TNCs had more
5 driver complaints of rape and sexual harassment
6 of customers in the last year than in the entire
7 180 years of the taxicab industry. Besides
8 adding to horrific traffic congestion and
9 pollution that an extra unregulated 175 vehicles
10 present.

11 Everyone involved in the taxicab
12 industry I hold responsible for these tragic
13 results that I must live with as a citizen of the
14 District of Columbia. Politicians, city
15 commissioners, agency chairmans, all contributed
16 and allowed for corruption to exist and therefore
17 must take the responsibility of their actions.

18 We will be confronted with
19 investigations and hopefully criminal
20 prosecutions. I intend to fully cooperate.
21 Investigations internationally and nationally are
22 beginning to take place as Uber has its own

1 turmoil and is no longer providing the illegal
2 political or financial support that it needs to
3 keep the taxi industry unbalanced in its favor.

4 The public is now very aware of the
5 problems and will be looking at all of you as a
6 scapegoat. I am sure this is the reason for this
7 hearing and conversation. As City Council Member
8 Mary Cheh puts distance between herself and the
9 taxicab industry and this agency, I call on all
10 of you to come clean and tell the truth.

11 Maybe some shred of ethics and decency
12 that the history of our industry really deserve.

13 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay.

14 MR. FRANKEL: One thing left. Here's
15 my advice. Make all rules, regulations, and
16 enforcement consistent in the industry. Giving
17 privilege only leads to the illegal influence of
18 corruption and tragic personal results that we
19 now have at hand in the taxicab industry and the
20 transportation systems of Washington, DC. Thank
21 you.

22 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you, Mr.

1 Frankel. Madam Secretary, who is the next
2 speaker?

3 SECRETARY MIXON: Mr. Massoud
4 Medghalchi. You have your statement, sir?

5 MR. MEDGHALCHI: No, ma'am. You've
6 heard the old adage, the dog ate my homework.
7 His computer ate mine last night. I would like
8 to speak, and I will provide you with the, at the
9 end, by the end of the day basically.

10 I honestly lost the whole thing. The
11 computer crashed.

12 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Massoud, for
13 today's meeting, we will proceed.

14 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Thank you.

15 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: But please proceed
16 with caution.

17 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Believe me, I
18 honestly had made a promise to Ms. Nixon and
19 intended to keep it. It's amazing.

20 MR. FRANKEL: I'll back him up. My
21 computer failed.

22 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: That's okay.

1 Things happen.

2 MR. MEDGHALCHI: It was hungry. I
3 will have to do it impromptu. I'll do my best
4 because Mr. Frankel basically covered everything
5 I would have wanted to say.

6 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Will three minutes
7 be enough?

8 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Hopefully.

9 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Okay, sir.

10 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Thank you. I'm
11 chairman of a newly founded association, United
12 D.C. Taxi Drivers Association. What today's
13 hearing is confronting, is basically making, it's
14 the making of the government itself. It's a
15 problem we had pointed out for years that the
16 taxicab industry was over saturated in DC by four
17 times higher number than the next highest city in
18 the country and unforeseen in the industrialized
19 world.

20 When the taxicabs were racing three at
21 a time for passengers and we were emphasizing
22 that it was creating a public safety danger, the

1 city overlooked it, not only they did that, they
2 brought in the TNCs that have, according to your
3 statistics, have signed up more than 175,000
4 people.

5 What do you expect will happen on the
6 streets when you do that. You will have
7 gridlocks. A lot of the gridlocks on the streets
8 of the D.C. today are because of presence of
9 approximately what we're estimating 20,000 extra
10 cars who are trying to supplement their income on
11 the back of taxicab drivers who are trying to put
12 a roof over their family's head and food at the
13 table.

14 This is a tragedy. People should be
15 hanging their heads in shame instead of trying to
16 pretend like they're trying to solve something
17 that's impossible to solve. When a taxicab
18 driver has gone on without a passenger for two
19 hours, he's desperate, sir. That makes up for a
20 tragedy soon.

21 Someone is going to get knocked out
22 while they're racing towards them. There are

1 private cars that are violating the same
2 loitering laws by leaps and bounds and they don't
3 get touched. Recently we've been conducting
4 surveys on the streets. They are no longer even
5 carrying the, the TNCs are no longer even
6 carrying the stickers for Virginia.

7 We have to ask for D.C. sticker to be
8 permanently affixed to the back of the windows.
9 Not that that is a big fix to the problem the
10 city has created, but at least they can be
11 identified so they can be equally enforced upon
12 because this is discriminatory.

13 The way the taxicabs are constantly
14 being written tickets to and these cars get away
15 with murder. They loiter in front of all the
16 bars late at night including the black cars, and
17 they basically mingle with the customers and pick
18 them up for cash.

19 D.C. cabdrivers would have been
20 impounded back in the old days when the reform
21 went into effect. No one is touching these guys.
22 I'm telling you. This is a tragedy waiting to

1 happen. As the emotions flare up on the streets,
2 one of these days you're going to have an attack
3 against your officers, drivers going at each
4 other, or going at the TNCs.

5 SECRETARY MIXON: You're three minutes
6 is up.

7 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Thank you, ma'am.

8 SECRETARY MIXON: Thank you.

9 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you,
10 Massoud. Next speaker, Madam Secretary.

11 SECRETARY MIXON: Yes. Next I have
12 Mr. Mohammed Afzal, A-F-Z-A-L. Mr. Mohammed A-F-
13 Z-A-L.

14 MALE PARTICIPANT: He isn't present.

15 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay. Next I have
16 Mr. Imran.

17 MALE PARTICIPANT: He's not here
18 either.

19 SECRETARY MIXON: And I did not get
20 the last name. Okay, neither those are present.
21 Mr. Jason Arvanites.

22 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: And before Jason

1 speaks, I want to acknowledge Jason is a member
2 of the For-Hire Vehicle Advisory Council, and we
3 appreciate his contribution.

4 MR. ARVANITES: Good morning, Director
5 Chrappah and Mr. Lerner and Councilwoman Wade.
6 My name is Jason Arvanites. I'm a member of the
7 DFHVAC council but also the general manager of
8 Washington, DC for Via which is also a PSV,
9 sometimes known as a TNC.

10 I've appreciated the DFHV's
11 constructing engagement with our company across a
12 wide range of issues and thank you for the
13 opportunity to address you today regarding the
14 topic of vehicle loitering.

15 As some of you know, Via is an on-
16 demand transportation service that utilizes
17 cutting edge technology. It groups multiple
18 passengers into the same vehicle along
19 dynamically updating routes.

20 We launched in Washington, DC a little
21 more than a year ago and have seen our service
22 grow quickly in the city. We also operate in New

1 York and Chicago, and between our three cities,
2 we provide hundreds of thousands of highly
3 efficient rides each week for riders who pay
4 affordable and predictable fares.

5 At Via we're working not only to
6 efficiently move DC residents and visitors around
7 the city, but also to make the city more livable
8 and sustainable. We agree that congestion is a
9 problem and that loitering by vehicles can be a
10 contributing factor.

11 That's one reason our service already
12 operates in a way to try and minimize loitering
13 and impact on traffic. First, Via focuses on
14 true ride-sharing, so not single occupancy rides,
15 in which multiple passengers ride in the same
16 vehicle.

17 By having several people share a
18 vehicle, we help reduce the number of cars
19 driving around that only have one passenger.
20 Second, we direct riders to carefully selected
21 corner pickups and drop-off points, each of which
22 has been vetted by the operations team here in

1 D.C.

2 This means that Via drivers do not
3 wait next to parked cars in the middle of the
4 street for passengers to get in or out of the
5 vehicle as they are directed to those corner
6 locations that have been previously selected.

7 And third, we have strict rules that
8 dictate short wait times for pickups such that
9 the drivers will wait only a brief period for
10 passengers who are not present.

11 I'd be happy to answer any questions
12 you have and also welcome the opportunity to
13 discuss any specific rule changes that you are
14 contemplating and thank you.

15 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you. Madam
16 Secretary, next speaker.

17 SECRETARY MIXON: Yes, Mr. Aaron
18 Brand.

19 MR. BRAND: Good morning, Director
20 Chrappah, Commissioner Wade, and Mr. Lerner. My
21 name is Aaron Brand. I'm Senior Regulatory
22 Counsel for Uber Technologies. Thank you for the

1 opportunity to testify today and for the
2 department's willingness to engage with
3 stakeholders on this issue.

4 While the hearing is focused on the
5 issue of loitering, we believe it's important to
6 think about that issue within the broader context
7 of reducing congestion in the district.

8 We at Uber are very focused on how we
9 can partner with public and private stakeholders
10 to help with this goal. Most important way to
11 reduce congestion is to reduce the number of cars
12 on the road.

13 At Uber, we're working hard to get
14 cars off the road by maximizing the efficiency of
15 every single Uber ride. We're doing that in a
16 number of ways.

17 First, we're investing heavily in our
18 carpool product, Uber Pool. Our product matches
19 riders going in the same direction which in turn
20 reduces the number of cars on the road. In the
21 district, we've invested millions in our pooling
22 together initiative to help increase carpooling

1 as a way to alleviate the strains caused by
2 SafeTrack.

3 And earlier this year, we worked with
4 the Department to resolve a dispute over
5 regulatory issue by agreeing to invest almost a
6 quarter of a million dollars to promote Uber Pool
7 rides.

8 In addition to Uber Pool, we recently
9 launched our Uber commute product in the district
10 which matches commuters who drive in to and out
11 of the district with fellow commuters that need a
12 ride.

13 We're excited that these products have
14 been so well received in the district and we're
15 grateful for the Department's and other district
16 leader's efforts to ensure that these types of
17 products fit into the District's transportation
18 ecosystem.

19 Beyond reducing the number of cars on
20 the road, we're also working to reduce curbside
21 congestion as caused by too many cars, parking or
22 idling on District curbs. According to DDOT, 25

1 percent of the congestion in downtown is caused
2 by driver circling around the block trying to
3 find an open parking spot.

4 Our business model, in large part,
5 depends on getting people to stop using their own
6 cars to drive into downtown, and to instead rely
7 on Uber to get around the District. So our
8 objectives are therefore very much aligned with
9 the District's goal of reducing the number of
10 drivers who circle District blocks looking for
11 parking.

12 Another critical goal for our company
13 is to get riders into cars as quickly and as
14 frequently as possible. In other words, it's bad
15 for us and our driver partners if they have to
16 loiter and there are several inherent aspects of
17 our business model that are designed to prevent
18 this.

19 For example, we rely on dynamic
20 pricing to get people into cars more efficiently.
21 We do this by communicating to drivers in real
22 time via the app that they're more likely to get

1 a ride and a ride at a better price for them, if
2 they travel from a less busy area to a busy area.

3 This means drivers are constantly
4 moving around the District toward areas where
5 their services are needed rather than waiting
6 idle on the curb. We are also engaging with
7 District leaders including department leaders and
8 district businesses to identify pickups and drop-
9 offs can happen more seamlessly and efficiently.

10 For example, we worked with DDOT, MPD,
11 the Department, and the Washington Nationals to
12 designate specific Uber pickup locations around
13 Nats Park which helps alleviate congestion before
14 and after Nationals games. We look forward to
15 hearing more from the Department and stakeholders
16 about the issue of loitering, how we can work
17 together to solve the problem, and we'd be happy
18 to provide additional written comments or answer
19 questions with our thoughts on whether additional
20 regulations are necessary and if so, how this
21 regulation should be drafted. Thank you very
22 much for your time.

1 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you, Aaron.
2 Madam Secretary, next speaker.

3 SECRETARY MIXON: Mr. Michael George.
4 Mr. Michael George. Next. I'll say the name.
5 Mr. A-K-R-A-M, last name, B-U-S-H-R-A. Are you
6 present? Mr. B-U-S-H-R-A. All right. Next on
7 the list, Mr., spell the name, F-E-K-A-D-U,
8 Walday. Are you present? Mr. Walday.

9 Next, Mr. Anwah Ibrahim. Mr. Ibrahim?
10 Director, those are all the names that I have
11 registered.

12 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Do we have any
13 unregistered speakers?

14 SECRETARY MIXON: Raise your hand,
15 any unregistered? I see one. Do I see any
16 others? I see two. I see three. Any others?
17 Okay. I see four, five, six. Okay, I think I
18 see about six.

19 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: All right. So
20 before we go to the unregistered speakers, just
21 make note of the unregistered speakers. Advisory
22 Council Member Dotti Love Wade has some questions

1 and this may be a good time to indulge while we
2 catalogue the unregistered speakers. So please.

3 MEMBER WADE: Good morning. It's good
4 to see all of you all out here again this month.
5 I hope your summer has been pretty productive. I
6 do have a lot of concerns with the loitering and
7 one of the hotspots that was not listed in the
8 presentation is the 3 thousand 31 hundred block
9 and 14th Street, in front of U.S.A., D.C.

10 When they developed that project, that
11 major development out there, they removed traffic
12 lanes to widen the streets for pedestrians. In
13 doing so, they created a natural traffic
14 congestion.

15 As the Chairman of the Agency
16 Commission at that time, I fought this because I
17 knew that you don't take away vehicle lanes when
18 you're increasing vehicular use of those lanes.
19 Before the development, all of you know, 14th
20 Street in that area was a ghost town.

21 But with the development, we knew what
22 was happening but DDOT already had their plans

1 and once they get plans started, it takes an act
2 of God almost to stop it.

3 So what has happened up there on 14th
4 Street is that there is actually only one
5 vehicular traffic lane in each direction, only
6 one. And invariably, I live only two blocks from
7 there, I cannot go up there without finding
8 loitering taxicabs and Uber drivers.

9 It is a serious problem because there
10 is absolutely nowhere for the other cars to go.
11 You can't park, you can't drive because you have
12 a lot of vehicles just waiting, idling. You know
13 they're out waiting for a fare. If I try to ask
14 them to move, move it, of course, I get cursed
15 out.

16 There's no respect given to the
17 security people who have the responsibility of
18 keeping that space cleared for their passengers
19 to actually pick up and drop off their bags.
20 They all don't use cabs, and they all don't use
21 Ubers, they use their private vehicles, and they
22 use public transportation, and it's difficult to

1 get to with, for the buses to go down 14th Street
2 with that severe loitering in that area.

3 I understand all the problems but
4 we've got to address that. For emergency
5 vehicles to come from 14th and Monroe, to 14th
6 and Columbia or 14th and Irving, to go across
7 town either way is impossible because we have one
8 lane, you have the lights to stop the traffic,
9 and then you have the loitering of the vehicles.

10 So this is a real serious problem. I
11 wasn't aware and I don't know why the tickets for
12 loitering were put on a moratorium, but I do want
13 to have a discussion about that because I was
14 surprised by it.

15 And my second issue was about the
16 moratorium. We know, our inspectors know, that
17 there's a no ticketing moratorium, but do our
18 partners, MPD, the U.S. Capitol Police, Metro, do
19 all of these partners know that there is a
20 moratorium or are they still issuing tickets? I
21 don't know what that stance is and I'm sure you
22 guys may be confused too. I don't want to see

1 you confused.

2 But this is a very, very serious issue
3 and as was discussed in the presentation, traffic
4 is horrendous as it is in D.C. and loitering
5 makes it even worse. I mean, it really makes it
6 worse. So we have a problem that we've got to
7 come up with a solution and pointing fingers and
8 name calling is not going to resolve it.

9 It's going to take hard dialogue,
10 hard choices, and hard decisions. Thank you.

11 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you,
12 Commission Council Dotti Love Wade. To answer
13 your question, we collaborate with our sister
14 agencies with respect to how to apply Title 31
15 regulations.

16 And we are not saying there are no
17 tickets being issued or no tickets will be
18 issued. The purpose of the embargo was to shift
19 towards the three-step process where you get a
20 verbal warning, you get a written warning, and
21 then you get like a Notice of Infraction that has
22 like a fine.

1 So it was a way to educate the
2 industry while simultaneously opening this
3 conversation about how should we apply the
4 existing rules and regulations and law on
5 loitering. Because as you all know, different,
6 for example, different ride sharing services have
7 different wait times built into the app.

8 So A may have a window of three
9 minutes, another may have a window of five
10 minutes, and if the passenger does not come, the
11 driver can cancel. There are different wait
12 times that ride sharing companies apply. There
13 are different wait times that taxi dispatch
14 companies also apply. There are different wait
15 times that limousine or black cars also apply.

16 So one of the things we are hoping to
17 cover through this process is to calibrate what
18 is the wait time that a private industry applies
19 to their drivers and their customers, and see if
20 that can help with measuring how long a
21 particular vehicle has been impeding the flow of
22 traffic, violating the city's rules and also

1 violating their dispatcher's rule.

2 So there are a lot of things that we
3 have to sort out and this is exactly what a
4 dialogue will provide. There is also another
5 school of thought that centers around what is
6 called curb rides.

7 And the idea there is that people will
8 have curb rides, the same way taxis have cab
9 rides or taxi stands. There may be other zones
10 or other areas set aside for different types of
11 for-hire vehicles or in an extreme case, people
12 will buy cab rides and that is one of the things
13 that has been espoused in the academic community.

14 In fact, the general political economy
15 has an article on this approach, but we don't
16 have all the answers. And what we are hoping to
17 do through this conversation is get multiple
18 perspectives to figure out what is the right way
19 to implement enforcement as it relates to
20 loitering.

21 MEMBER WADE: Yes, but it's kind of
22 one-sided because the taxicab drivers are easily

1 identifiable and the for-hire, private for-hire
2 vehicles are not as easily identifiable. So it
3 goes back to the partners how have they been
4 instructed to enforce.

5 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: We apply
6 enforcement evenly. That's what statistical
7 information has clearly educated the industry
8 over the last couple of years because I used to
9 smile when people would say, enforcement only
10 issue tickets to taxi drivers and another group
11 will say enforcement only issues tickets to ride
12 sharing drivers.

13 So I laugh. I said which is which.
14 You know. Data tells the story. When it comes
15 to identification of ride sharing vehicles, they
16 have the trade dress that is applied. We also
17 know there are additional identification or
18 additional markings that go on the vehicle.

19 But rather than focus on how to
20 identify a vehicle, we want to hear how the
21 public want to deal with this issue of loitering
22 in the context of congestion, in the context of

1 public safety, in the context of, you know,
2 working long hours just to make a couple of bucks
3 so that when we come forth with a change in
4 approach, it is balanced, it is something that
5 has incorporated feedback from everybody. And it
6 will make our city a livable and a moveable place
7 as well.

8 MEMBER WADE: Okay.

9 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you. Madam
10 Secretary. If you could call the non-registered
11 speakers in the order that you can identify them,
12 that would be great.

13 SECRETARY MIXON: Yes. Thank you.
14 You'll have three minutes each. I will spell
15 your name for the court reporter. If I've
16 spelled it wrong, please let me know, then
17 approach the microphone.

18 So, first person, name spelled, D-E-G-
19 F-A-E, last name, S-E-T-E-G-N. So, yes, please.
20 And then, of course, please state your name.

21 MR. SETEGN: Thank you. My name is
22 Degfae, D-E-G-F-A-E, Chairman of United Ventures

1 Consortium, Inc. Thank you, Mr. Chrappah for
2 this opportunity.

3 First of all, you know, in this city,
4 we brag about air, clean air and most of the
5 vehicles, like 175 or more vehicles, is running
6 around never having been inspected in the city.

7 So to remedy all of this kind of
8 problems, this vehicle should be inspected and to
9 have a visible logo just like the other vehicle
10 for-hire because this vehicles have nothing to do
11 to sit in the city, taking the parking spot or
12 whether there's a meter or no meter, the spot,
13 drivers inside waiting for a call.

14 Because they don't have a visible
15 signage, the congestion, you know, is treated
16 like any ordinary private vehicle. So I request,
17 you know, to have these vehicles to have a
18 visible signage and also pass just like any
19 vehicle in Washington, D.C. to pass an inspection
20 also.

21 And also there's another danger during
22 a very heavy traffic on 14th Street, a vehicle

1 blinking hazard, standing on that congested
2 street for two to three minutes, imagine what the
3 congestion would be.

4 So because also the vehicles do not
5 have a signage, nobody know that, legal, you
6 know, the law enforcement they don't know what
7 those vehicles are so that makes it very
8 difficult.

9 And also by taking the non-meter or
10 meter parking spots, businesses are hurting.
11 It's not like five or ten vehicles, it's like
12 ten, 20 thousand of those vehicles taking all the
13 parking spots because they don't have the signage
14 we have this problem.

15 And we are requesting all those TNCs
16 to have a visible signage because most of those
17 signages are not visible to the law enforcement
18 from distance and we want them to have those kind
19 of signage.

20 And the other worry is like interferes
21 with the passage of vehicles. This vehicles just
22 close like taxicabs in the city by slowing their

1 speed. This also renders from the free flow of
2 the vehicles therefore still we don't have those
3 signages, we don't know what those vehicles are,
4 and we want, you know, this vehicles to have that
5 signage again.

6 And if there is a driver inside the
7 vehicle with a signage, we have to consider this
8 also as a loitering. Thank you.

9 SECRETARY MIXON: Thank you.

10 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Mr. Setegn, let me
11 ask a clarifying question. I heard a couple of
12 things from your testimony. I thank you for
13 that. One is that private vehicles should pass
14 inspection. The second is that they should have
15 visible signs.

16 Tell me a little bit about the visible
17 signs because today, private vehicles have a
18 trade dress, sometimes on the side, sometimes by
19 the back window panel, sometimes on the front, so
20 help me understand the idea that you have.

21 Is it that the sign needs to be bigger
22 or the signage should be on the vehicle

1 consistently. Tell me a little bit more about
2 that or share with the public what your idea is.

3 MR. SETEGN: Yes. First of all, you
4 know, we want to have a very clean city, where
5 emptying vehicles like taxis and these vehicles
6 we don't know where they came from, whether we
7 don't know they have inspection passed or not,
8 the city's is polluted.

9 The number of vehicles which has
10 increased in the city, there are too many. So if
11 a vehicle wants to perform a business in
12 Washington, DC, they need to have or to pass
13 inspection and a signage which is currently is
14 not visible for law enforcement from distance.

15 We want them to have a very visible
16 signage on the vehicles. That's what I mean.

17 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: All right. Thank
18 you very much.

19 MEMBER WADE: I think consistency and
20 location would help too.

21 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Certainly.
22 Certainly. Thank you.

1 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay. Next Michael,
2 M-I-C-H-A-E-L, last name, G-E-B-R-U.

3 MR. GEBRU: Good morning everybody,
4 good morning Commissioner.

5 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Good morning.

6 MEMBER WADE: Good morning.

7 MR. GEBRU: I am an Uber driver. I've
8 been driving for eight years in city. The good
9 thing what I learned from the city is they taught
10 me how to drive. Where to make U-turn, where to
11 draw a customer, and really that's to me is
12 learning something.

13 Sometimes when I drive in the evening,
14 I used to, the person tells you you have to put
15 it to the curb but there's no curb. And I tell
16 them, where's the curb. There is no curb. And
17 sometimes we try to really, you know, say
18 something about it, but it's okay.

19 Also really about the problem,
20 especially the weekends, Saturday and Sunday, as
21 well as Friday and Saturday. I have a solution.
22 The solution is instead of collecting dimes and

1 quarters on the street, the city, by the city, I
2 think we should make no parking from such hours
3 to such hours and then driver can drop off
4 customer and pick up customer.

5 Those cars parking on the street, I
6 mean, I know the city has to make money but at
7 the same time, if we're talking about congestion,
8 we have to make no parking from such hour to such
9 hour because it's too busy the city, it's so
10 busy. So I think that's a solution for me.

11 The other one is, well, say something
12 about Uber and Lyft. Their driver, they don't
13 know how to drive in the city. Do you know a
14 week ago they meet in front of the railroad --
15 that's suicidal for me. It's suicidal. They
16 stop you, they take your car, they take
17 everything.

18 Guess what happen. They stop him and
19 they take out the customer. The customer says
20 what's wrong. Don't worry about it, we have more
21 , take another Uber. They take the car. So Uber
22 has to really teach as drivers, as their drivers.

1 I know they say we're not a driver,
2 they only collect the money, but tell them
3 training. I took a training at UDC how to be
4 professional driver in the city, where the
5 roadways are, where the tourists are, where the
6 short cuts are. Who knows that.

7 Somebody came from somewhere. I see
8 California car driving in D.C. as Uber. Can you
9 believe that. California car. They don't know
10 the city. GPS. If you really check how many
11 Ubers are getting accident every month or every
12 week, you will won't believe it.

13 You won't believe. Many of them.
14 That's a problem for us. So two sister in one
15 city, that's the problem. Thank you.

16 SECRETARY MIXON: Thank you.

17 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you, Mr.
18 Gebru.

19 SECRETARY MIXON: Next we have Ms.
20 Danlette, Danlette Williams, D-A-N-N-L-E --

21 MS. WILLIAMS: No, D-A-N-L-E-T-T-E.

22 SECRETARY MIXON: D-A-N --

1 MS. WILLIAMS: L-E --

2 SECRETARY MIXON: L-E-T-T-E.

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

4 SECRETARY MIXON: Williams, W-I-L-L-I-
5 A-M-S.

6 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. Good
7 morning, everyone. Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

8 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Good morning.

9 MS. WILLIAMS: I have a problem, and
10 I have a question for you guys. My problem is
11 you guys are talking about we cabdriver
12 loitering. If we don't loiter, we won't be able
13 to make our little bit of living. Because there
14 are so many other cars out on the street there,
15 you got Uber, you got everybody. I work this
16 morning, a Uber driver and I had to get into it.

17 He parked on the cab stand. When I
18 asked him to move he told me I must tell him
19 please. I said please, will you please move.
20 And you know what said please to him because that
21 was a place not for him to be park. Because if I
22 park on the street, I'm getting a ticket.

1 And he park in my parking space.
2 Secondly, the last problem with you guys is that
3 why are you guys trying to give us an app that we
4 have to put an app in our car and take our dome
5 light down. How will the people know that we are
6 taxicab if you take the dome light off. Because
7 that's one of the things to explain to me to come
8 to this meeting.

9 We are not making enough money.
10 Before we used to try but now you go to the
11 airport, go see the line when you get to the
12 airport, you can't get in because of so many
13 cars. How are we going to make money to pay our
14 bills, to take care of our children when you guys
15 every month or every year you're changing
16 something in the car that we have to pay for.

17 We have to pay for the app to put in
18 the car. The dome light, they will charge us to
19 take it off. The computer in the car, they will
20 charge us to take it off. How are we going to
21 survive this way. Will you, please guys answer
22 me and tell me something because this is very

1 hard on me.

2 I've been driving cab for a long time
3 and every year or every two years we get a lot of
4 problem, something coming up that we have to
5 spend money for. You come up with your law, then
6 you say we must spend the money for it. Why are
7 you treating us this way.

8 We self, everybody, we try to make our
9 honest living, but you got guys are trying to hit
10 us up and this is not fair to us at all as a
11 cabdriver. When you want us to be out there to
12 take care of people. It is not right.

13 The app they're coming to put in we
14 have to pay for it. I don't know nothing about
15 computer. I tell you the truth. But you want us
16 to this there. So I beg you please, think over
17 this us into. It's very hard on us. I beg you.
18 Thank you.

19 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you, Ms.
20 Williams. I want to address something that you
21 said and regrettably, you are grossly
22 misinformed. We have the Client Services

1 Department on the second floor, you should stop
2 by, and someone will assist you. But you are not
3 being required to change your dome light.

4 There's absolutely no regulation or
5 law that requires you change your dome lights.
6 What this illustrates is something that we know
7 about, where people bite off a rumor and run with
8 it, and see the sky is about to fall. We've had
9 several meetings, several newsletters, several
10 teleconferences explaining the adaption of the
11 Digital Dispatch solutions.

12 Fundamentally, it reduces drivers'
13 operating cost. You've sent us thousands of
14 feedback. We have hundreds of complaints on file
15 about the challenges you have and the expenses
16 you have, and how business is declining and how
17 you've been traumatized, and we are taking steps
18 to not only improve your ability to get new
19 revenue opportunities, but also cut your cost.

20 I don't have to be a savvy
21 businessman, but it's something that I understand
22 that most people understand. You prove your

1 profitability by increasing revenue or reducing
2 your cost. So I strongly urge you, since you are
3 already here, thank you for the taking time to
4 visit with us today, to stop by the second floor
5 and speak with any of our client service
6 representative so they can let you know what is
7 actually happening.

8 Next non-registered speaker, Madam
9 Secretary.

10 SECRETARY MIXON: Yes. Mr.
11 Christopher, C-H-R-I-S-T-O-P-H-E-R, last name, E-
12 K-H-A-T-O-R.

13 MR. EKHATOR: Good afternoon,
14 Director, or good morning. My name is
15 Christopher Ekhaton. And I've been doing this
16 taxi business for so many years.

17 As a matter of fact, I think what I
18 would need to talk about with this three minutes
19 is to ask you a series of questions, maybe you
20 give us a feedback, but I will talk this, a
21 little bit with some of the things some of my
22 colleagues have said about this loitering.

1 If you guys are enforcing anything,
2 okay, and the chair lady said, we need more
3 transportation in the District of Columbia. Why
4 can't you guys also enforce a school where this
5 other private transportation can take classes
6 like we did in UDC and get certified like these
7 guys to know what to do in the city.

8 Like I said, people turning in front
9 of, you know, building when they're not supposed
10 to turn, stopping, people going the wrong tunnel
11 instead of coming out because they don't know the
12 city. You see, I also want to talk a little bit
13 about this part of the business.

14 I want to advise you to carry this to
15 the Mayor, Mayor Cheh since Uber has bought them
16 over to open a school for this Lyft, Uber,
17 whatever. They're here to help just like taxi
18 driver.

19 Why can't they also enforce a school
20 where their drivers can go and take classes and
21 know more about the city instead of coming from
22 Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and don't know what

1 he's doing.

2 The other thing I want to find out
3 from you, is about an email we got about a few
4 weeks ago. I know the last time we met, you were
5 talking about this new enforcement about dome
6 light, about tablet, and all this stuff.

7 If your department is going to send
8 email to us, say you don't want a car of 2009 to
9 2008 to be on the street, and then in the long
10 run, they turn around to 2008. It means that
11 someone in your department is not doing a good
12 job.

13 I want you to introduce to that person
14 who sent out the email. Did you do a proof check
15 before they send that email to cause confusion on
16 all the cabdriver even though you people always
17 say we cabdrivers, we don't come here to
18 representative ourselves.

19 So it looks like you just implement on
20 things anyhow without thinking twice before you
21 send email to the cabdrivers. Okay. You know,
22 another thing I would like to say is that, you

1 see, I really appreciate the way you guys are
2 handling the taxi drivers who know much about the
3 city.

4 The city transportation always remain
5 but because Uber has buy you guys over, literal
6 buy you guys over, you don't care about the city
7 transportation anymore so you treat us anyhow.

8 SECRETARY MIXON: Sir, your time is
9 up.

10 MR. EKHATOR: So you guys should think
11 twice about whatever you are doing.

12 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you,
13 Christopher for your comments. I have one
14 comment to unpack and address some of the things
15 you've mentioned. Most specifically that we are
16 here to listen from people, residents, drivers,
17 need for taxi, ride sharing.

18 However, this practice of making false
19 or unsubstantiated allegations against city
20 officials is unacceptable. It is absolutely
21 wrong for you to stand up and say city officials,
22 the mayor, city council members, having bought

1 Uber by some company.

2 That is not the way to have
3 constructive dialogue. Next non-registered
4 speaker, Madam Secretary.

5 SECRETARY MIXON: Yes, Mr. S-H-A-M-S-
6 I-B-E-E-N, last name A-D-A-M-O-H. Thank you.

7 MR. ADAMOH: My name is Shamsibeen
8 Adamoh. Good morning, Chairman and the other
9 officials. Most of the things I wanted to say
10 are already said by my colleagues. I have been
11 in taxi industry for almost 40 years. And I know
12 what I went through before I could get my license
13 to drive.

14 Even when the questions was 25
15 questions, it was very hard to pass at one
16 sitting. Not to talk of when it was increased to
17 50 questions because at one point I lost my
18 license without knowing that I have to renew
19 within 45 days and all that, so when I lost my
20 first license, I had to, I had to be referred to
21 take the 50 questions one.

22 After the 50 questions one, I had to

1 be sent for another trip. Anyway, actually, I
2 really appreciate all that you have been doing in
3 order to improve the city and the way to run the
4 taxi issue, run the taxi business in the city,
5 but there are some still little things that
6 happened not to have been put into consideration
7 in the sense that maybe people think that being a
8 cabdriver we can just, we somehow treat that
9 anyhow, which I think is unfair to us.

10 The majority of us, those that have
11 been in this industry for long happen to have
12 trained or raise their children, sent them to
13 college including me through this business. But
14 I happen to be a first native born out of the
15 country and came to the United States in order to
16 make life, to improve the quality of my life and
17 to my children which I really am grateful for.

18 Now what I would like to suggest
19 because since we are having so many other
20 companies coming into the industry, is to also
21 put us into consideration in the sense that we
22 are the numbers of drivers, even the taxi driver,

1 not to talk of Uber drivers and Lyft, I mean,
2 we're increasing though we know that the city is
3 developing, more people are coming into the city,
4 but I think at this point, we need to limit the
5 numbers of those that the license should be
6 issued to.

7 Because I remember at a point, I mean,
8 before, they were trying to, during the time of
9 Mayor Pratt Kelly, trying to limit everything in
10 order to limit the numbers of drivers, I mean,
11 that will be driving in the city before the Uber
12 or something came up and all that.

13 So as a result of that, please, I want
14 you to look into that one. Secondly, only just a
15 few minutes, concerning the illegal parking or
16 blocking the traffic, just one second.

17 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Mr. Adamoh, I have
18 to be fair to everybody, so I ask that you wrap
19 up in ten seconds.

20 MR. ADAMOH: Ten seconds, okay.
21 Concerning the stand, taxicab stand and all that,
22 I'm surprised that in some of the locations that

1 were designated for the taxicab stand, they took
2 the stand off, I mean they took the sign off the
3 stand.

4 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: I'm going to ask
5 that you submit writing clarification about your
6 comment about taxicab stands and then we'll
7 consider it. We have to be fair to everybody and
8 this will be a demonstration of that. Thank you
9 very much so much, really, for coming up with
10 your testimony.

11 The last unregistered speaker that we
12 have is Dawit Dagneu.

13 MR. DAGNEW: Good morning.

14 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Good morning.

15 MR. DAGNEW: Director Chrappah, Ms.
16 Wade, Counselor. Well, it's been said all along
17 so from Massoud and Frankel almost everything
18 that needs to be said, but I just want to focus
19 on a little bit, since we're talking about this
20 loitering.

21 It looks like we just blew up 185
22 thousand vehicles in the city and we don't know

1 how to get them off. We brought them in the
2 first place and now we're tied up, now the street
3 is packed.

4 When you're updating this rules and
5 regulations, let's just go back to the original,
6 what we had in the book first. That would say
7 whether you in Virginia or D.C. or Maryland cabs,
8 they have each and their own regulations. When I
9 say this, if you are a Virginia car, taxis coming
10 into the District, you need to take your dispatch
11 before you even cross into the District,
12 otherwise you need to be ticketed for loitering.

13 You cannot sit around the city to wait
14 for a fare. That was the same for Montgomery
15 County or PG County. So if this rule exists,
16 let's just enforce that. Why should we allow
17 this 175 thousand vehicles which are, for most
18 part, Maryland, Virginia, Pittsburgh,
19 Pennsylvania, West Virginia.

20 All kinds of tags come into the city
21 sitting around in Washington. They're all from
22 all over the United States I can see and I can

1 prove this. Why do we allow those interstate
2 vehicles to come and sit around Washington.

3 It's not only slow driving, the
4 parking is gone. All parking in Washington has
5 been saturated. Residents don't have no parking
6 no more. They have to fight for parking. You
7 were asking, and I'm going to answer the follow
8 up question, you said, the sign, the decor is not
9 visible.

10 Of course it's not visible. It's not.
11 Most vehicles, large vehicles for most part, that
12 Uber uses, are tinted. That little sticker says
13 you or whatever that you mean, you cannot even
14 see it. First of all, they cannot have it both
15 way. It's their private car so you use it for
16 private. If you want to use for it for
17 commercial, put a big sign outside, permanent
18 sign outside. Permanent sign.

19 And I don't have a problem with
20 competing with the business but let's just play
21 by the rule. If I go to Virginia, I'd be
22 ticketed if I pick up a passenger. So why should

1 a Virginian come and pick up here. Same goes
2 with Montgomery County. It is a crime, in fact,
3 if you go out and pick up a fare from Maryland
4 and Virginia.

5 So in the District Columbia, you can
6 come and sit down whenever you feel like sipping
7 your coffee waiting for a fare. Sit around Union
8 Station. If you're a cabdriver, sit at the curb
9 at Union Station, you know what would happen
10 there.

11 So let's just play by the rules. If
12 that rule mean view, let's just put it together
13 and bring it out for everybody. Thank you for
14 your time.

15 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Dawit, let me get
16 clarification on what I think you suggested and
17 correct me if I'm wrong. I think you're
18 suggesting that for non-DC plated vehicles,
19 vehicles of Virginia or Maryland, before they
20 come into DC they should have proof of dispatch.

21 MR. DAGNEW: Absolutely. That's what
22 is happening. If you a Virginian here, if you

1 have a pickup here, red top or yellow cab, or
2 whatever it may be, if you have to pick up from
3 District, you have to take your dispatch before
4 crossing to DC line.

5 That is absolutely correct and that
6 should work for those everybody, Uber. You can
7 sit in the Virginia or Maryland, then take your
8 call from there and come here. If it's working
9 for Virginia taxi, Maryland taxi, it should work
10 for Uber.

11 You can go back and visit if that is
12 the case. We, the District cabs, we can go, we
13 can drop passengers away but we can't bring in.
14 That's not going to be fair for us.

15 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Council Member
16 Wade, do you have any comment before I wrap up?

17 MEMBER WADE: I have a question about
18 the 175 thousand vehicles for hire that are being
19 bantered around and where that figure came from.
20 Just me personally, I know over 30 people who
21 were Uber drivers when it first came out. They
22 did it for about six or eight weeks and as you

1 guys know, taxi driving is not for everybody.

2 And a quick buck may sound like a
3 quick buck and easy money right off, but in very
4 short order, these drivers learned that it's not
5 as lucrative as they were led to believe it would
6 be, and it was a lot more work and just didn't
7 have the mentality.

8 So my concern is that even though they
9 may have had an extraordinarily high number of
10 people signing up, how many active drivers are
11 there actually at any given time with these
12 services because I see where they are constantly
13 advertising for drivers.

14 So if they had a saturation of
15 drivers, they would not be spending money seeking
16 new drivers. So I am really concerned. It's a
17 major problem. I'm not minimizing the impact of
18 the for-hire vehicles on the industry.

19 I'm not minimizing it at all, but I'm
20 also concerned about the numbers that are being
21 bantered around. I'm as concerned about that as
22 I am about public official bashing.

1 Because when you say, you guys are
2 bought, that included me and I'm not bought. I
3 do this voluntarily and receive no benefit. So I
4 understand frustration, but you have to be fair
5 to the people who get up every day and come and
6 work in the District, district government and
7 federal government, who provide services to the
8 community. Please, temper your frustrations not
9 to attack us.

10 Because we are truly trying to find
11 solutions and not just on the taxi commission but
12 your advisory neighbor commissioners are being
13 pelted daily about loitering in the neighborhoods
14 by not just taxis, but also all the for-hire
15 vehicles, and not just that, but people who come
16 and park in the neighborhoods around Metro.

17 So we have serious problems that
18 everybody is really working very hard to try to
19 resolve and name calling just does not give me a
20 good feeling about serving. Thank you.

21 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you. As far
22 as the number of active private vehicles for-

1 hire, the department does not have access to
2 those records. Most people know that the privacy
3 of the businesses don't have to share their
4 vehicle and driver accounting precludes us from
5 obtaining such a list.

6 However, different numbers have been
7 made through public statements over the course of
8 the introduction of ride sharing so there are
9 some numbers that is generally acceptable. One
10 is that the universe of ride sharing drivers, as
11 much as it could be actually higher than 180
12 thousand, not all of them are on the road at the
13 same time.

14 That's just fact. It's a small
15 percentage. What a true number is for
16 competitive reasons, for trade secret issues,
17 none of the companies are publically saying what
18 the number of active drivers.

19 And the number actually fluctuates.
20 Today, the number of active drivers could very
21 well and in fact, it is different from a month
22 ago. So it is always about a snapshot in time.

1 However, what we also do know from our
2 research and talking to neighboring jurisdictions
3 and also sister cities in New York, Miami,
4 Houston, and other places, it's that the
5 proportion of private vehicle or private drivers
6 to taxis or limousine comes in a cascading
7 format, where generally over 90 percent are
8 private vehicles.

9 Taxis happen to be a small sliver and
10 in the case of limousine, a small sliver as well.
11 Also at any given point in time, a driver may
12 apply their trade across multiple platforms so
13 you have a driver today that is pushing a cab,
14 after lunch, gets into his private vehicle, he
15 has maybe the Via, the Uber, the Lyft sticker on
16 and hustling all three.

17 So we look at the broader picture and
18 that is there is an explosion in the growth of
19 drivers. We also look at the earnings that is
20 reported and would like to see all drivers,
21 regardless of the mode that it chooses to
22 participate in, have a better chance of earning

1 more.

2 And from a Department perspective,
3 working with councilman, is would explore ways to
4 increase the pie for the industry because we
5 define the competition not within the various
6 place in the industry. We define the competition
7 as individuals who choose to drive into the city
8 instead of using a for-hire vehicle.

9 And that could be one way where we
10 also take on the loitering and congestion
11 challenge, but this dialogue is very helpful and
12 certainly the questions you've asked about the
13 numbers, how many are really active, these are
14 issues that we have to grapple with so that we
15 can make a more informed policy, decision.

16 In closing, I would like to thank you
17 all for participating. It's wonderful to hear
18 different perspectives. The participation has
19 been healthy.

20 I also want to thank those who joined
21 us through Facebook Live. A number of drivers
22 chose that option. That is something that we are

1 exploring and will try to find ways to make
2 having a dialogue very convenient.

3 But in closing, again, I want to
4 emphasize that the approach of the Department has
5 been taken is not to say we not going to issue
6 any tickets. That is absolutely false. One, we
7 give you a verbal warning. Two, if you have the
8 same dude, we give you a written warning. And if
9 you are same dude again, you get a live ticket.
10 I think that is a balanced approach that has been
11 working for the industry.

12 We have received positive feedback of
13 that approach but at some point, we will clarify
14 the definition of loitering incorporating some of
15 the suggestions we've heard and once we get to
16 that position, we will make some type of public
17 announcement or another meeting, and then we will
18 move forward. Thank you all, and have a
19 wonderful day.

20 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
21 went off the record at 11:46 a.m.)
22

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing on Loitering

Before: D.C. Department of For-hire Vehicles

Date: 08-09-17

Place: Washington, DC

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Court Reporter

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