

D.C. DEPARTMENT OF FOR-HIRE VEHICLES

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GENERAL COMMISSION MEETING

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PUBLIC HEARING TO REVIEW
TAXICAB RATE STRUCTURE

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FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 4TH, 2016

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The Commission met in the D.C.
Department of For-Hire Vehicles, 2235 Shannon
Place SE, Washington, D.C. 20020, Hearing Room
Suite 2032 at 10:15 a.m., Ernest Chrappah, Acting
Director, presiding.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

ERNEST CHRAPPAH, Acting Director
DOTTI LOVE WADE, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

JUANDA MIXON, Secretary to the Commission

JAQUES P. LERNER, ESQ., General Counsel

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 10:15 a.m.

3 MR. CHRAPPAH: Good morning and
4 welcome to the public hearing on review of the
5 taxicab restructure. My name is Ernest Chrappah,
6 Acting Director of the Department of For-Hire
7 Vehicles. We are located in Public Hearing #2023
8 at 2235 Shannon Place Southeast, Washington D.C.
9 Today is Friday, November 4th and the time is
10 10:15.

11 Before we get started to today's
12 proceeding, I would like to invite you all to
13 join me in a moment of silence to those who
14 departed.

15 (Moment of silence)

16 Thank you. The DC Court authorizes
17 the Department of For-Hire Vehicles to set
18 taxicab rates. It also requires the department
19 to review taxicab restructure and at least
20 consider it once every two years. The last such
21 review was conducted in 2014 where the then
22 Taxicab Commission determined that no changes to

1 the taxicab rates will be made, except to
2 eliminate meter rates for digitally dispatched
3 rides. As part of its final review of taxicab
4 rates the Department of For-Hire Vehicles is
5 required to hold at least one public hearing to
6 solicit stakeholder feedback; then within 120
7 days of the hearing it must review the feedback
8 provided and issue a decision on when our taxicab
9 rates should be adjusted.

10 If the Department determines that
11 modifications to the taxicab restructure are
12 needed, those changes must be implemented no
13 later than 120 days after the hearing date. In
14 making this decision the Department will balance
15 the interest of the industry stakeholders,
16 traveling public, as for us to ensure adequate
17 fare and reasonable conversation for operators.

18 Today's hearing was originally going
19 to be divided into two parts; however, based off
20 the registered speakers we will keep only Part 1.
21 Part 1 is for public vehicle for-hire businesses,
22 advocacy groups including unions, taxicab

1 companies and taxicab associations. These
2 entities may appear to your representatives,
3 including leaders, managers, owners and/or
4 attorneys. We will give each participant 30
5 minutes. We have two registered speakers for
6 Part 1 and no registered speakers for Part 2.
7 The registered speakers for Part 1 are Mr.
8 Jeffrey Schaeffer and Royale Simms.

9 Madame Secretary, please call the
10 registered speakers in the order that they sign
11 up.

12 MS. MIXON: Mr. Jeffrey Schaeffer, you
13 may take a seat at the table, please. Make sure
14 the microphone is close enough that we can hear
15 you, and sign in also please.

16 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yes, thank you very
17 much. Jeffrey Schaeffer, TranCo Inc. and I
18 certainly won't need 30 minutes. Thank you.

19 I'll just take a few minutes; there
20 was some things that come to my attention
21 recently about rates that were concerning. The
22 Section 801 Rates and Charges you have a sticker

1 that appears to have been inadvertently priced at
2 a \$35 wait time, and through some of the rule-
3 makings I see it's been in effect for about two
4 years now. There was an emergency rule-making
5 which was dated March 6th, 2015 in the system
6 that came out talking about the emergency rule-
7 making is necessary to change the wait time in
8 Rate 801.7c1C which was inadvertently increased
9 from \$25 per hour to \$35 per hour. And a final
10 rule-making published December of 2014. However,
11 no one's changed the meter rate and the majority
12 of all taxis are running at the \$25 wait time.

13 Recently, I don't know what sparked
14 it, but somebody started to change meter rates,
15 maybe it's the calibration, but there are
16 companies that have been getting a lot of
17 inquiries as a meter company from drivers to
18 change the rate. I was alarmed because it's
19 going to be a rate increase, and if somebody's
20 been riding even though it's been on the books
21 for two years, no one's really changed it. If
22 someone's been riding along and a lot of

1 customers are regular customers who go to work
2 every day or take the same trips, all the sudden
3 if they get a vehicle, that rate is going to go
4 up in the same time frame, the same distance, the
5 same traffic pattern, and an increase in rates.

6 I'm just really alarmed about that
7 because the effect that the TNC's has had on the
8 taxi trips has been quite large. The trips,
9 you've seen a drastic decrease in free hails.
10 So, I really propose that we change it back to
11 the \$25 rate before and make some kind of notice
12 if they're going to go that way before there's
13 too many meters switching over, because I know a
14 few meter companies have done a lot of changes in
15 the past couple of weeks.

16 The next thing I wanted to bring up,
17 and I think time is of the essence, because since
18 2012 we've had a Snow Emergency Rate that is \$15
19 per trip, and this \$15 per trip basically makes
20 it an \$18.50 drop. So there are times when
21 someone may go a few blocks and it's \$20 because
22 the drop is \$18.50. I think that has really

1 caused a decrease in trips due to large Snow
2 Emergency Fare increase. The original Snow
3 Emergency Fare was double the base fare, so I
4 would propose that the agency look into changing
5 the Snow Emergency either to maybe \$7 per trip or
6 go back to double the base fare, or do a \$4 per
7 mile rate.

8 I know it's difficult; you want to get
9 drivers out there and there's some incentive to
10 get drivers on the road during snow to get people
11 traveling, but \$4 per mile I think is reasonable
12 to take care of the danger and additional damages
13 that happen to cars, and to get the incentive to
14 get someone out there. It also takes care of the
15 short trips if someone goes a couple miles, it's
16 only an extra \$4.

17 So, those are the two things that I
18 would like the agency to look into is the rates
19 and just take in consideration the fact that you
20 can catch a taxi across town from Union Station
21 and catch an Uber across town from Union Station
22 and the rates are considerably different. The

1 Uber rate is about 60 percent of the taxi, which
2 causing an alarm at Union Station because I see
3 drivers lined up waiting for hours, and Uber's
4 coming picking off in that second line, and
5 passengers just continuing to use that. So, I
6 think a rate increase would be alarming at this
7 time with the current market.

8 Thank you very much.

9 MR. CHRAPPAH: All right, thank you
10 Mr. Schaeffer. One question to help me
11 understand your testimony a little bit; are you
12 also suggesting that we take a look at the
13 contract rate which is currently \$35 an hour?

14 MR. SCHAEFFER: The hourly, the
15 touring rate. The touring rate is not a huge
16 thing, a lot of people don't use it, but really
17 if you could take a look at everything. I mean,
18 if we run fares and take Uber and Lyft and the
19 taxi rate, and then take maybe some outside
20 jurisdictions and see where we're at and maybe a
21 time to look at everything. Because I've had
22 drivers come to me and say how can we get a

1 reduced fare to get more business back, realizing
2 if you drop it a little bit, maybe people will
3 ride the taxis more. But if you get more trips
4 at the end of the day, that net result end of the
5 day is more revenue for the driver, so it's not
6 per trip, it's just getting people back into the
7 taxis.

8 But my two suggestions were the wait
9 time should not be \$35 per hour; it should be
10 where everybody's programmed at now \$25. I think
11 even though it's been legal to change it for two
12 years, 80 percent of the taxis do not have it.
13 I've checked with other fleet owners, and they're
14 also in line with my thoughts about the fact that
15 the majority of drivers have not changed it and
16 it would be alarming at this time to change it.

17 Then, while we're taking this, I think
18 the Snow Emergency Fare is something that needs
19 to be looked at in addition to the reducing the
20 wait time back to the original \$25 approved rate
21 as opposed to an inadvertently rate because of
22 the sticker.

1 MR. CHRAPPAH: All right, thank you
2 very much.

3 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yes, sir.

4 MR. CHRAPPAH: Before I call the
5 second speaker I want to acknowledge the presence
6 of our For-Hire Vehicle Advisory Council member,
7 Ms. Dotti Love Wade. Good to see you.

8 MS. WADE: Thank you.

9 MR. CHRAPPAH: I appreciate the
10 efforts that you put into the industry and your
11 focus on our cause and our protection and we are
12 delighted to have you in the new role, so thank
13 you.

14 MS. WADE: Thank you so much.

15 MR. CHRAPPAH: Second registered
16 speaker is Mr. Royale Simms. Royale, would you
17 please provide to the seat and provide your
18 testimony.

19 MR. SIMMS: Good morning.

20 MR. CHRAPPAH: Good morning.

21 MR. SIMMS: Thank you for the
22 opportunity to testify. I also don't think it'll

1 take 30 minutes.

2 First, on the actual hearing itself.
3 District of Columbia Taxicab Commission held a
4 rate hearing that was required by DC Code 50-301
5 17 on June 20th, 2014. Prior to that public
6 hearing there were four notices published within
7 the DC register. The notice for this hearing was
8 published on October 28th, 2016 and this hearing
9 was scheduled for a week later. The Department
10 of For-Hire Vehicles did not comply with the
11 requirement to review the rate within 24 months.
12 The Department of For-Hire Vehicles has fast-
13 tracked in this rate review without providing
14 adequate notice to the public. We're asking that
15 the department hold a second public hearing.

16 This agency was recently established
17 and it was taken from the democratic structure of
18 the commission. I think it's a dubious signal to
19 the industry and to the public in large of the
20 regulatory practices to come that the Department
21 would provide one-week notice before deciding to
22 hold a public hearing on the most important

1 economic discussion impacting stakeholders. The
2 commission provided 48 days notice before the
3 last rate review, and so why would the standard
4 be lower for the Department of For-Hire Vehicles?

5 The Department of For-Hire Vehicles
6 must meet its mandate to maintain a taxicab
7 transportation system which provides owners and
8 operators of taxicabs with reasonable and just
9 compensation for their services, and which is
10 reasonably priced and readily accessible across
11 to a broad section of the public. A significant
12 opportunity for the public to provide input is
13 necessary for the agency to meet that mandate.

14 I just want to talk quickly about
15 growth in the number of providers while there's a
16 decline in trips. In 2014 the number of taxicab
17 drivers decreased from the previous year to 6,944
18 and the total trips declined to 18 million. In
19 2015 the number of licensed taxicab drivers
20 increased to 8,094 while the total trips declined
21 to 16.2 million. In 2016 the number of licensed
22 taxicab drivers increased to 9,660 and total

1 trips declined to 14.7 million. The total
2 industry revenues have declined by an estimated
3 30 percent in three years, while the number of
4 operators has increased by nearly 40 percent.

5 The Department of For-Hire Vehicle's
6 policies have created a surplus in drivers
7 competing for decreasing revenues. We believe
8 that the Department of For-Hire Vehicles should
9 increase the training and testing requirements to
10 ensure that operators are able to provide the
11 level of services demanded by customers. The
12 agency should produce a study to determine what
13 is actual driver income. The last industry study
14 of 2014 is no longer valid as the fleet has
15 increased and the baseline trips per hour has
16 decreased. We recommend that the Department of
17 For-Hire Vehicles complete a study that projects
18 future incomes based on trends and determine a
19 rate structure using the projections.

20 On sources of increased revenue, we
21 want to see more transparency from the Department
22 of For-Hire Vehicles. The agency has announced

1 several grant programs and pilot initiatives.
2 However, we have received complaints from drivers
3 about the pricing structure related to service
4 delivery and the scoring related to grant
5 applications. Our members want to participate in
6 programs offered, but at the same time they want
7 to know more about how the wages are determined
8 and how grantees are selected before signing
9 contracts.

10 To ensure just compensation for
11 drivers, the Department of For-Hire Vehicles
12 should take three steps to increase revenues
13 generated taxicabs. First, the Department of
14 For-Hire Vehicles should eliminate the customer
15 surcharge. Second, the Department of For-Hire
16 Vehicles should approve a trunk usage fee.
17 Finally, the Department of For-Hire Vehicles
18 should permit an additional, should increase the
19 extra passenger charge.

20 The surcharge revenues has increased
21 the income for the Department of For-Hire
22 Vehicles, the surcharge amount is passed onto

1 customers and we think it should be eliminated
2 and that income diverted to drivers. If the
3 income from the surcharge is directed to drivers,
4 this would increase the revenues for the drivers,
5 offset some of their losses and the customers
6 will not experience any price increase. Our
7 first preference is that the surcharge is
8 completely eliminated. That would give drivers
9 an increase of 1.5 percent on their average fare.
10 Currently the surcharge is 25 cents. If the
11 Department of For-Hire Vehicles does not want to
12 eliminate the surcharge, we suggest a reduction
13 of the surcharge by 30 percent to match the
14 decline in taxicab business. That will reduce
15 the surcharge to 17 cents providing drivers with
16 a 1 percent increase in their average fare.

17 Trunk fees; the trunk fee was
18 eliminated when the meter was set to its current
19 level. The fee incentivizes high levels of
20 customer service by compensating drivers for the
21 additional work required. When loading luggage,
22 unloading luggage for customers, taxi drivers

1 take several additional steps they wouldn't
2 normally have to perform. These steps increase
3 risk to injury, increases trip time, increases
4 wear and tear on their vehicles. Currently
5 drivers that perform these tasks are
6 uncompensated.

7 On extra passenger fee, we suggest an
8 increase of \$1 per trip. Drivers request that
9 their services be fairly compensated. The
10 additional extra passenger fee would be an
11 adjustment to ensure drivers are making fair
12 wages. It's particularly detrimental for drivers
13 who use vans or SUV's; those services are -- they
14 can load up seven passengers and only have a
15 dollar for one additional passenger. It's not
16 fair; it's incompatible with the market. If you
17 look at private vehicles for-hire, larger cars
18 typically get more money for the number of
19 passengers they can load.

20 Then a final note, that I know you all
21 can't do much about, but I think that this agency
22 should look at -- the vehicle for-hire industry

1 is in the middle of an unsustainable price war
2 that is driving rates for service below what is
3 profitable for any driver. Mega-corporations are
4 subsidizing their trips at a loss in efforts to
5 drive out current competition and create new
6 monopoly enterprises. The Department of For-Hire
7 Vehicles has determined that the most important
8 factor in consumer choice is price. The ability
9 of these mega-corporations to offer services
10 below a fixed rate creates an unfair market and
11 is fueling the growth of private vehicle for-hire
12 services.

13 The most economically sound solution
14 is the creation of a price floor for all of
15 vehicle for-hire services. The inherent
16 unfairness in the market can be resolved by
17 making all the vehicle for-hire services use the
18 mileage rate set for taxicabs. Currently there's
19 a consumer surplus of about a \$1.60 per dollar
20 spent on Uber. The current per mile rate for
21 Uber is \$1.02, while the current mileage rate for
22 taxis is \$2.16. A price floor is feasible at the

1 taxi mileage rate and a consumer surplus of 56
2 cents will remain.

3 Basically, consumers are willing to
4 pay higher rates for livery service. The steep
5 discounts are driven by monopolistic motives. A
6 collapse in the taxi industry caused by pricing
7 pressures from private for-hire services will
8 leave consumers vulnerable. It is not in the
9 public interest to allow this continued undercut.
10 A price floor is a reasonable step when a
11 commodity or a good is available at a price too
12 low for fare return. Price floors are effective
13 when set below an equilibrium price. Here the
14 equilibrium price is \$2.62 per mile. A price
15 floor at \$2.16 will be an appropriate
16 intervention to provide assistance to vehicle
17 for-hire drivers.

18 That's it.

19 MR. CHRAPPAH: Thank you, Royale
20 Simms. I want to make sure I understand a few
21 things about your testimony. When the surcharge
22 was implemented three years back, as part of the

1 modern taxi system roll out, drivers were given
2 25 cents extra per trip, which is reflected in
3 the base rate of \$3.25, and passengers were
4 assessed 25 cents per trip also, which is the
5 consumer surcharge as far as the agency. Are you
6 suggesting that the 25 cents passenger surcharge
7 is completely eliminated, or you are suggesting
8 that it is redistributed back to the driver
9 earnings or something in between? Can you
10 clarify that a little bit?

11 MR. SIMMS: So, the 25 cent rate comes
12 to a commission; we would suggest leaving it in
13 the fare so the driver still gets \$3.50 from the
14 customer. But instead of that money flowing to
15 the commission, we would suggest that it stays
16 with the driver. If you don't want to do that, I
17 will understand why you wouldn't. We suggest
18 reducing it to 17 cents, but leaving it \$3.50 so
19 that the customer still pays the same amount.
20 But instead of 25 cents going to the commission,
21 17 cents will flow to the commission.

22 MR. CHRAPPAH: So, you are suggesting

1 a base rate of \$3.50 and then 17 goes to the
2 commission, and that's it?

3 MR. SIMMS: 17 cents goes to
4 commission. Yes, so the consumer sees no
5 difference on the current price structure.

6 MR. CHRAPPAH: Okay. Can you tell me
7 a little bit more about the current fees from
8 your experience, bumping taxis against other
9 transportation modes, specifically ride-share
10 platforms. Do they have a luggage or trunk fee?

11 MR. SIMMS: No one has it right now,
12 neither private vehicles or public vehicles for-
13 hire have a trunk fee.

14 MR. CHRAPPAH: So, that will be a new
15 fee that you'd like to be assessed?

16 MR. SIMMS: So, part of my last point
17 was that everyone in this market from the
18 driver's perspective is getting paid under what
19 the service demands. These wages aren't fair for
20 the service that they're providing, risk to
21 injury. So, yes, it's just compensation for the
22 work.

1 MR. CHRAPPAH: Okay, one idea that
2 have been floated and hopefully it will have us
3 to weigh a lot more is the addition of some type
4 of automatic tip; if the driver gets weighed in
5 the automatic tip, it's not applicable. What are
6 your initial thoughts on that?

7 MR. SIMMS: So, an automatic tip as a
8 base tip, meaning that if you get some rating
9 that you automatically get 20 percent or is it 25
10 percent? Tipping, what we have now in NTS,
11 they're giving three options for a tip and
12 consumers have been tipping pretty well. So, I
13 don't know if you bill them a tip. I think
14 consumer choice is important when it comes to a
15 tip. I don't know what consumers would think
16 about that, and I don't know how it will be
17 determined. So, I would need more information
18 before I can provide an opinion on that automatic
19 tip.

20 MR. CHRAPPAH: Okay, thank you very
21 much for your time. We will consider your
22 testimony as well as others. For the group who

1 are here today and those who were not able to
2 join us, however there are few comments by our
3 Chief Council Member, Dotti Wade, will also share
4 a few thoughts. Up until November 15th you can
5 still submit comments before the commission would
6 go deep into this research and analysis of the
7 restructure.

8 So, based on what you heard today or
9 based on ideas you have or new ideas that may
10 come up after today is to have an opportunity to
11 submit some thoughts for us to consider, and that
12 opportunity will remain live until the close of
13 business on November 15th. You simply have to
14 email, fax or mail your comment to the secretary
15 of the Department, the same way that you
16 typically sent other comments.

17 On that note, I'd like to pass the
18 matter on to Advisory Council Member Wade.

19 MS. WADE: Good morning. So good to
20 see so many of you back here today. I just have
21 a couple quick questions I'd like clarification
22 on, not right now, but maybe you can send in some

1 written answers. The first one had to do with
2 the trunk fee, I was wondering if that exists
3 anywhere else in the country, how would you
4 propose assessing a trunk fee, what that rate
5 could potentially be, how would it enhance your
6 competition with the other vehicles for-hire and
7 vehicles in the industry?

8 Also, on the surcharge, are you aware
9 of what the surcharge that you are currently
10 assessed is used for? And how would the purposes
11 be impacted by, eliminate that surcharge? What
12 services would be impacted by eliminating that
13 surcharge? Would it basically just be based for
14 a rate increase and not fair to the public, their
15 notice to the public that it is a rate increase?
16 I think that's a little disingenuous to say a
17 surcharge and then it not be a surcharge; it's
18 really a base rate increase. I would just like
19 those two major issues addressed for me and help
20 us when we do our research. Most definitely I'd
21 like to know about the trunk fee and what kind of
22 precedent has been set or this would set. Thank

1 you.

2 MR. CHRAPPAH: We have a few minutes
3 left on the clock, so is there anybody who is not
4 a registered speaker who would like to share a
5 few words? We'll have a minute to just two
6 minutes.

7 Okay, so I see four hands. We'll go
8 in the order of how I see them. Degfae, Larry
9 and the gentleman behind Royale and another
10 gentleman in the back. So, two minutes each
11 please. Degfae, please.

12 MS. MIXON: Okay, and before you start
13 your two minutes, if you would spell your name,
14 please, for the court reporter.

15 MR. SETEGN: My name is Degfae Setegn,
16 D-E-G-F-A-E, S-E-T-E-G-N.

17 MS. MIXON: Thank you.

18 MR. SETEGN: Thank you for this
19 opportunity. I have some -- as you well know,
20 that you receive the driver-owned company and we
21 always get the feedback from our drivers, and the
22 main concern the drivers have is the decreasing

1 number of trips. So, at this critical time where
2 the other share-riding companies charging much
3 less fare during this time and increasing
4 anything or changing any fare will drastically
5 also change the trip number of the taxi drivers.

6 So, that suggestion or the question
7 came up about the trunk; the drivers they don't
8 want to have, most of them as far as I represent
9 560 cab drivers. We want just to remain as it is
10 and in future when we have the digital meters
11 where we can at least have the, to change the
12 fares accordingly, let's wait until then, but now
13 we don't need to change anything. Let's have
14 that and then the trunk charge or additional
15 passenger charge will just sway the riders to get
16 another option. So, my suggestion will be let's
17 just stick to what we have and no increase.

18 Anytime, you know, it is closely
19 followed by the other companies or the ride-
20 sharing, anything which is changed in the DC
21 taxi, immediately it will be popular and there
22 will be the negative publicity again with the

1 taxi, so this is not the time to increase any
2 rates. Thank you.

3 MS. MIXON: Thank you.

4 MR. CHRAPPAH: Thank you, Degfae.

5 How are you?

6 MR. FRANKEL: I'm good; how are you
7 today?

8 MR. CHRAPPAH: I'm doing okay.

9 MS. MIXON: Thank you. State and
10 spell your name, please, for the court reporter.

11 MR. FRANKEL: Yes, Larry Frankel. L-
12 A-R-R-Y, F-R-A-N-K-E-L.

13 MS. MIXON: Thank you, I'll be right
14 back.

15 MR. FRANKEL: Thank you. Any change
16 in fares will only play into the hands of Uber.
17 As long as you allow Uber to break all anti-trust
18 laws and unfair competition no matter where you
19 move, up or down in any fare structure, you will
20 be hit with an anti-trust movement by Uber and
21 Lyft. There's only one way that you can set the
22 level playing field for taxicabs in the city, and

1 what we do and what I'm doing right now in Europe
2 is that we are combining not only the dispatching
3 systems in Europe for taxicabs and limos, but
4 we're also trying to find a standardized fare
5 system, so when any fare gets into a cab in
6 London or in France or in Hungary, they'll be
7 charged the same Euro amount no matter where they
8 go.

9 This could be done in America, and
10 when it's done on a nationwide basis, you are
11 able to fight anti-trust movements that Uber and
12 Lyft do. It can be used by using the
13 International Taxicab Regulators Association that
14 you're already a member of to provide that idea
15 to them. Taking out jurisdictions in America for
16 taxicabs and limos will provide a better
17 competitive situation for everybody. Now, it
18 sounds kind of crazy to start with, but if you do
19 the math on this, because I mean there are
20 variables; more expensive in New York City than
21 it is in Minneapolis. There's a reason why that
22 may be, but the cab drivers in New York City are

1 making less than they are in Minneapolis when you
2 take into the effect of the competition that is
3 unfair there.

4 So, this is the idea; you cannot move
5 a fare up or down, you cannot bring in
6 surcharges. The only thing you can do is either
7 bring in this idea or directly compete with Uber
8 in all respects and allow there be surge charging
9 at moments when there's less cabs. In all
10 respects, I don't have to go through what Uber
11 does, but if you allow the cab drivers to do
12 exactly what Uber does, that's competitive. But
13 my idea is also if you want to keep things
14 regulated.

15 Thank you very much.

16 MR. CHRAPPAH: Could you elaborate a
17 little bit more about the idea of allowing
18 drivers to directly prices or operators? Can you
19 tell me a little bit more about what you're
20 thinking there?

21 MR. FRANKEL: You mean in surcharging?
22 I'm sorry.

1 MR. CHRAPPAH: In terms of surge
2 pricing; I thought I heard something from you
3 that drivers should be allowed to do surge
4 pricing?

5 MR. FRANKEL: Well, yes, as far as
6 competitive with Uber. Now, of course it'd be
7 difficult to say who should regulate it, but I
8 guess since you're in there, yes, Uber started
9 off by surcharging only when it needed to because
10 of lack of drivers. It doesn't do that anymore;
11 it surcharges over eight times every day in
12 Washington DC. Its own customers do not realize
13 in most cases that they're paying much more for a
14 ride than they would if they had hailed a
15 taxicab. That's something which should be
16 expressed also to the public, but because they do
17 so and because they have such a tight grip on the
18 market -- part of what they do is obviously to
19 destroy the taxicab and limo industries, and
20 they've done so by being able to charge much less
21 when they need to and charge much more when they
22 need to, and don't need to now. So, that's my

1 suggestion.

2 I mean, I understand that the public,
3 it would not be fair to the public for
4 surcharging, we never felt it was fair for Uber
5 to be allowed to do so. But in the fact that it
6 does do so on a worldwide basis, and this is a
7 fact in the one situation that cab drivers have
8 no basis to compete on or are able to, other than
9 switch to being an Uber driver or Lyft driver.
10 This is something that needs to be considered; if
11 you want to compete, you have to have surge
12 pricing or take it out of the fare.

13 MR. CHRAPPAH: It would be great if
14 you could diagram it out or at least write some
15 low or high so we consider, because we've heard
16 similar notions and one of the things that
17 bubbled to the surface was the idea that a driver
18 would indicate how much he was going to charge a
19 mile or paid time or the digital meter and that
20 will be posted so that anybody who was looking
21 for that driver would in effect get that surge.
22 At least the idea is to have floating around, so

1 if you could solidify yourself and send it to us,
2 that will be helpful to us for the research.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. FRANKEL: Okay, appreciate it.

5 Have a good day.

6 MR. CHRAPPAH: You, too. Next
7 speaker.

8 MR. AFWORK: Thank you, all. My name
9 is Yonas Afwork.

10 MR. CHRAPPAH: Could you repeat that,
11 again?

12 MR. AFWORK: Yonas Afwork, a driver.

13 MS. MIXON: Would you spell it,
14 please, for the court reporter?

15 MR. AFWORK: Sure. First name Y-O-N-
16 A-S and last name A-F-W-O-R-K.

17 MS. MIXON: Thank you.

18 MR. AFWORK: You're welcome. Most of
19 my comments are already raised by the gentleman
20 before me, but I would like to stress two more
21 points; the first one is regarding to --

22 MS. MIXON: Can you pull the mic a

1 little bit closer to you?

2 MR. AFWORK: Okay. Some of the points
3 have already been raised by the gentleman before
4 me. I just have two more points to raise.

5 MS. MIXON: Sure.

6 MR. AFWORK: The first one is
7 regarding to, which are of course strongly
8 advised to commission, the Department to consider
9 the flood of issuing face ID to new drivers given
10 the fact that we are struggling income-wise or
11 income has been declined, the past five years we
12 have seen that. The Department has to work on
13 that, to study the demand versus supply of the
14 market to eliminate the addition of face ID to
15 new drivers.

16 The second one is cost-wise; I don't
17 think it's time for us to compare and contrast
18 with the share-ride companies, given the fact
19 that drivers are heavily regulated, paying excess
20 amount to the system, whereas drivers in share-
21 ride are not considered or they are bypassing the
22 whole regulations. This has to be considerably

1 studied and addressed.

2 Also, considering the rates, I'm okay
3 with the existing rate structure. I don't think
4 it's time to consider restructuring the fare
5 rate, and also the fact that the snow emergency
6 has been addressed earlier; customers are asking
7 to pay more compared to the other share-rides.
8 But the fact is as a driver, if I'm not working
9 for a week due to snow emergency issues, that
10 can't be an excuse. I'm supposed to be the whole
11 use at the end of the week. So, if you consider
12 they don't have any costs to pay at the end of
13 the week. So, that has to be considered that
14 drivers are heavily regulated and this excess
15 regulations has to be get rid of before we start
16 comparing the taxicab business with the rest of
17 the share rides.

18 Thank you, that's what I have.

19 MR. CHRAPPAH: Okay, thank you for
20 your comments. Could you elaborate a little bit
21 on the specific or general nature or provide
22 examples of regulations that need to be

1 eliminated or exercised? Could you give some
2 examples?

3 MR. AFWORK: Regarding the
4 regulations?

5 MR. CHRAPPAH: Or regulations you
6 think needs to go?

7 MR. AFWORK: We're required to carry
8 car insurance, we are also paying all the
9 registering, paying a lot of payments to the
10 system, including the ones that we pay \$50 once
11 to the Department, which has nothing to do. We
12 just sign to the Department, we're paying \$50, so
13 to my point, that has to be get rid of by the
14 Department.

15 MR. CHRAPPAH: Is that the only thing
16 you want?

17 MR. AFWORK: One, the regulations are,
18 it's so much detail you go through.

19 MR. CHRAPPAH: Can you elaborate on
20 the nature of regulations? Maybe I can give you
21 some examples; when people talk about
22 deregulation or regulation of regulations, some

1 of the things that come up, it's not insurance.
2 Insurance is a safety thing. For example,
3 someone who will hire you, those two you have to
4 check, that somebody will hire you and after you
5 have been checked, prevent felons and those who
6 don't need to be driving from being behind a
7 wheel.

8 Another type of regulation is price
9 structure, so if you have examples now, that's
10 fine, but it will be very helpful for us if you
11 can lay out the chapters or regulations, or even
12 provide examples of what you think will need to
13 go to what has the revenue opportunities. You
14 don't have to do that today if you're not
15 prepared, you can always submit that following a
16 process of submitting what you've told us.

17 Thank you very much for your time.

18 MR. AFWORK: Sure, thank you.

19 MR. CHRAPPAH: The last registered
20 speaker?

21 MR. WAHAB: I'm not registered.

22 MR. CHRAPPAH: The last registered

1 speaker, that is you, sir.

2 MR. WAHAB: Hello everybody. My name
3 is Abdul Wahab, A-B-D-U-L, W-A-H-A-B.

4 Well, my recommendation is at this
5 time not to increase any rate, even asking
6 reduction. The reason is this; most of
7 passengers who left us, I mean they left us in
8 large number. I mean, there are too many
9 taxicabs, there are too many cabs, but there are
10 no passengers, especially daytime. Most drivers
11 they struggle at night because most share-ride
12 like Uber and Lyft they work at night. So those
13 who was night shift they can vision it, and we
14 are saturated daytime, especially, everywhere,
15 Union Station. There is no Cab Stand; we are
16 just driving around and we cannot find
17 passengers. So, decreasing the rate is the only
18 way we can get the passenger back to us.

19 I mean, our vehicles are improving; we
20 have mostly hybrid, we have electric vehicles, we
21 have nicer vehicle, newer. But what's the use if
22 you don't have no passengers? See, and the

1 reason, I pick up some passengers who sometimes
2 switch to taxi and go back to the share. They
3 told actually we left you guys because the share-
4 ride is cheaper, half price. The pools or others
5 are much cheaper, like riding a bus. So, we lost
6 the passenger because of the rate, so we have to
7 bring it down to the level of our competitions,
8 so the passenger will look, okay -- right now
9 there are too many empty taxis and it is easy for
10 them to ride with us, especially when the winter
11 comes, it's cold, they cannot wait outside. They
12 waiting longer to get a share-ride, because there
13 are not too many, but there are too many empty
14 taxis just driving around.

15 So, if we lower our price, no one will
16 stand the cold outside, they will run to us and
17 we have more experience, we are more safe drivers
18 than somebody just coming in to make some
19 changes. But the price is the main reason; we
20 have to do same thing what they do, decrease the
21 price, increase the time of surge, because we can
22 compensate. When we lower it, we can compensate

1 when there is a time, a surge, a customer willing
2 to pay. So we have to bring the price down and I
3 don't recommend any increase about this.

4 You know, emergency, we got to be
5 reasonable, our price has to be lowered. I tell
6 you; it's the price what they fighting us to put
7 us out of business.

8 MR. CHRAPPAH: Thank you very much for
9 your testimony. We appreciate it.

10 MR. WAHAB: You're welcome.

11 MR. CHRAPPAH: I think there's one
12 more gentleman who came forward. Please, Mr.
13 Chubbs.

14 MR. CHUBBS: Good morning. I was
15 trying to see whether it's morning or afternoon.
16 My name is E.J. Chubbs, Independent Cab #69.

17 Well, first I wanted to begin by
18 saying I hear Uber being mentioned a couple
19 times. We can't compare us to Uber, we cannot
20 match Uber. I mean, Uber doesn't have the price
21 structure like we do. What I'm saying is Uber,
22 for example, can, if you know Uber, you can drive

1 with Uber if you have a '06 up until now. You
2 all restrict us; we got to have 2011. See,
3 that's a problem with us. I don't think at this
4 particular time, although we may need it, I don't
5 think an increase is a good idea at this time,
6 because we have too much and too many different
7 competition. So, I just believe -- and we slowly
8 going out of business as it is -- if we go and
9 increase our fare structure, that's going to make
10 us go even quicker.

11 The other thing is if we're going to
12 consider -- I know you all are considering
13 because you have to do it every two years -- but
14 if we was going to think on increasing the rate,
15 I don't think this up and down rate is a good
16 idea, also. We use to get \$1.50 for each
17 additional passenger. I'm not recommending we
18 get \$1.50, but if we get a dollar for each
19 additional passenger, that will be our increase
20 and it wouldn't affect the rate structure. Any
21 other thing, trunk space. I work at a hotel and
22 people come, you pick up four people and sometime

1 they need a SUV but they want you to try to put
2 it in your trunk.

3 Now, trunk is very important, because
4 if I go down for an inspection and if I got a
5 slight tear or something, they're going to turn
6 me down for inspection. That's a cause factor to
7 me, but you want me to ride -- I'm just using the
8 four people with huge, huge luggage. We get no
9 compensation for that. If we would be able to
10 charge for the trunk space, I think she asked
11 about, that would also be an increase that we
12 wouldn't have to worry about going all around
13 through this fare structure change.

14 Again, I repeat myself, I don't think
15 this is the right time to try to get that \$35
16 hourly rate and I don't agree with going back to
17 \$7 for the Snow Emergency. So, that's my idea of
18 giving us an increase that you won't have to
19 change the whole fare structure; it'll just be an
20 added on, which have always been, the first
21 passenger is always free. Then if you've got
22 three more, you get \$2. Okay, so that would be--

1 MR. CHRAPPAH: Thank you very much for
2 your comments, Mr. Chubbs. I encourage you to
3 submit that in writing after this, but before
4 November 15th to the Secretary of the commission.
5 For those of you who want to go to the online
6 channel, you should expect that we'll have a
7 thread on our website, specifically the "Use Your
8 Voice" section to tell us what you think so they
9 can provide additional commentary for the, reveal
10 the rate structure.

11 On that note, I'd like to thank you
12 all for spending time with us this Friday. I
13 hope you the best of the weekend, and do remember
14 to go out and vote early.

15 Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
17 went off the record at 11:07 a.m.)
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22

A		C	
A-B-D-U-L 36:3 A-F-W-O-R-K 31:16 A-R-R-Y 26:12 A-S 31:16 a.m 1:11 2:2 41:17 Abdul 36:3 ability 17:8 able 13:10 22:1 27:11 29:20 30:8 40:9 above-entitled 41:16 accessible 12:10 acknowledge 10:5 Acting 1:11,14 2:6 actual 11:2 13:13 added 40:20 addition 9:19 21:3 32:14 additional 7:12 14:18 15:21 16:1,10,15 25:14 39:17,19 41:9 addressed 23:19 33:1,6 adequate 3:16 11:14 adjusted 3:9 adjustment 16:11 advised 32:8 Advisory 10:6 22:18 advocacy 3:22 affect 39:20 afternoon 38:15 Afwork 31:8,9,12,12,15 31:18 32:2,6 34:3,7 34:17 35:18 agency 7:4,18 11:16 12:13 13:12,22 16:21 19:5 agree 40:16 alarm 8:2 alarmed 5:18 6:6 alarming 8:6 9:16 allow 18:9 26:17 28:8 28:11 allowed 29:3 30:5 allowing 28:17 America 27:9,15 amount 14:22 19:19 27:7 32:20 analysis 22:6 and/or 4:3 announced 13:22 answers 23:1 anti-trust 26:17,20 27:11 anybody 24:3 30:20 anymore 29:10 Anytime 25:18 appear 4:2 appears 5:1	applicable 21:5 applications 14:5 appreciate 10:9 31:4 38:9 appropriate 18:15 approve 14:16 approved 9:20 asked 40:10 asking 11:14 33:6 36:5 assessed 19:4 20:15 23:10 assessing 23:4 assistance 18:16 Association 27:13 associations 4:1 attention 4:20 attorneys 4:4 authorizes 2:16 automatic 21:4,5,7,18 automatically 21:9 available 18:11 average 15:9,16 aware 23:8	cab 25:9 27:5,22 28:11 30:7 36:15 38:16 cabs 28:9 36:9 calibration 5:15 call 4:9 10:4 car 34:8 care 7:12,14 carry 34:7 cars 7:13 16:17 cases 29:13 catch 7:20,21 cause 10:11 40:6 caused 7:1 18:6 causing 8:2 cent 19:11 cents 15:10,15 18:2 19:2,4,6,18,20,21 20:3 certainly 4:18 change 5:7,14,18 6:10 9:11,16 25:5,11,13 26:15 40:13,19 changed 5:11,21 9:15 25:20 changes 2:22 3:12 6:14 37:19 changing 7:4 25:4 channel 41:6 chapters 35:11 charge 14:19 25:14,15 29:20,21 30:18 40:10 charged 27:7 Charges 4:22 charging 25:2 28:8 cheaper 37:4,5 check 35:4 checked 9:13 35:5 Chief 22:3 choice 17:8 21:14 Chrappah 1:11,14 2:3,5 8:9 10:1,4,9,15,20 18:19 19:22 20:6,14 21:1,20 24:2 26:4,8 28:16 29:1 30:13 31:6 31:10 33:19 34:5,15 34:19 35:19,22 38:8 38:11 41:1 Chubbs 38:13,14,16 41:2 city 26:22 27:20,22 clarification 22:21 clarify 19:10 clock 24:3 close 4:14 22:12 closely 25:18 closer 32:1 Code 11:4	cold 37:11,16 collapse 18:6 Columbia 11:3 combining 27:2 come 4:20 8:22 11:20 22:10 35:1 39:22 comes 19:11 21:14 37:11 coming 8:4 37:18 comment 22:14 commentary 41:9 comments 22:2,5,16 31:19 33:20 41:2 commission 1:3,10,18 2:22 11:3,18 12:2 19:12,15,20,21 20:2,4 22:5 32:8 41:4 Commissioner 1:15 COMMISSIONERS 1:13 commodity 18:11 companies 4:1 5:16 6:14 25:2,19 32:18 company 5:17 24:20 compare 32:17 38:19 compared 33:7 comparing 33:16 compensate 37:22,22 compensated 16:9 compensating 15:20 compensation 12:9 14:10 20:21 40:9 compete 28:7 30:8,11 competing 13:7 competition 17:5 23:6 26:18 28:2 39:7 competitions 37:7 competitive 27:17 28:12 29:6 complaints 14:2 complete 13:17 completely 15:8 19:7 comply 11:10 concern 24:22 concerning 4:21 conducted 2:21 consider 2:20 21:21 22:11 30:15 32:8 33:4 33:11 39:12 considerably 7:22 32:22 consideration 7:19 considered 30:10 32:21 33:13 considering 33:2 39:12 consumer 17:8,19 18:1 19:5 20:4 21:14 consumers 18:3,8 21:12,15

continued 18:9
 continuing 8:5
 contract 8:13
 contracts 14:9
 contrast 32:17
 conversation 3:17
 cost-wise 32:16
 costs 33:12
 Council 10:6 22:3,18
 Counsel 1:19
 country 23:3
 couple 6:15 7:15 22:21
 38:18
 course 29:6 32:7
 court 2:16 24:14 26:10
 31:14
 crazy 27:18
 create 17:5
 created 13:6
 creates 17:10
 creation 17:14
 critical 25:1
 current 8:7 15:18 17:5
 17:20,21 20:5,7
 currently 8:13 15:10
 16:4 17:18 23:9
 customer 14:14 15:20
 19:14,19 38:1
 customers 6:1,1 13:11
 15:1,5,22 29:12 33:6

D

D-E-G-F-A-E 24:16
 D.C 1:1,10,11 2:8
 damages 7:12
 danger 7:12
 date 3:13
 dated 5:5
 day 6:2 9:4,5 29:11 31:5
 days 3:7,13 12:2
 daytime 36:10,14
 DC 2:16 11:4,7 25:20
 29:12
 December 5:10
 deciding 11:21
 decision 3:8,14
 decline 12:16 15:14
 declined 12:18,20 13:1
 13:2 32:11
 decrease 6:9 7:1 37:20
 decreased 12:17 13:16
 decreasing 13:7 24:22
 36:17
 deep 22:6
 definitely 23:20
 Degfae 24:8,11,15 26:4
 delighted 10:12
 delivery 14:4

demand 32:13
 demanded 13:11
 demands 20:19
 democratic 11:17
 departed 2:14
 department 1:1,10 2:6
 2:17,18 3:4,10,14
 11:9,12,15,20 12:4,5
 13:5,8,16,21 14:11,13
 14:15,17,21 15:11
 17:6 22:15 32:8,12
 34:11,12,14

deregulation 34:22
 destroy 29:19
 detail 34:18
 determine 13:12,18
 determined 2:22 14:7
 17:7 21:17
 determines 3:10
 detrimental 16:12
 diagram 30:14
 difference 20:5
 different 7:22 39:6
 difficult 7:8 29:7
 digital 25:10 30:19
 digitally 3:2
 directed 15:3
 directly 28:7,18
 Director 1:12,14 2:6
 discounts 18:5
 discussion 12:1
 disingenuous 23:16
 dispatched 3:2
 dispatching 27:2
 distance 6:4
 District 11:3
 diverted 15:2
 divided 3:19
 doing 26:8 27:1
 dollar 16:15 17:19
 39:18
 Dotti 1:15 10:7 22:3
 double 7:3,6
 drastic 6:9
 drastically 25:4
 drive 17:5 38:22
 driven 18:5
 driver 9:5 13:13 17:3
 19:8,13,16 21:4 30:9
 30:9,17,21 31:12 33:8
 driver's 20:18
 driver-owned 24:20
 drivers 5:17 7:9,10 8:3
 8:22 9:15 12:17,19,22
 13:6 14:2,11 15:2,3,4
 15:8,15,20,22 16:5,8
 16:11,12 18:17 19:1
 24:21,22 25:5,7,9

27:22 28:11,18 29:3
 29:10 30:7 32:9,15,19
 32:20 33:14 36:10
 37:17
 driving 17:2 35:6 36:16
 37:14
 drop 6:20,22 9:2
 dubious 11:18
 due 7:1 33:9

E

E.J 38:16
 earlier 33:6
 early 41:14
 earnings 19:9
 easy 37:9
 economic 12:1
 economically 17:13
 effect 5:3 6:7 28:2
 30:21
 effective 18:12
 efforts 10:10 17:4
 eight 29:11
 either 7:5 28:6
 elaborate 28:16 33:20
 34:19
 electric 36:20
 eliminate 3:2 14:14
 15:12 23:11 32:14
 eliminated 15:1,8,18
 19:7 34:1
 eliminating 23:12
 email 22:14
 emergency 5:4,6 6:18
 7:2,3,5 9:18 33:5,9
 38:4 40:17
 empty 37:9,13
 encourage 41:2
 enhance 23:5
 ensure 3:16 13:10
 14:10 16:11
 enterprises 17:6
 entities 4:2
 equilibrium 18:13,14
 Ernest 1:11,14 2:5
 especially 36:10,14
 37:10
 ESQ 1:19
 essence 6:17
 established 11:16
 estimated 13:2
 Euro 27:7
 Europe 27:1,3
 everybody 27:17 36:2
 everybody's 9:10
 exactly 28:12
 example 35:2 38:22
 examples 33:22 34:2

34:21 35:9,12
 excess 32:19 33:14
 excuse 33:10
 exercised 34:1
 existing 33:3
 exists 23:2
 expect 41:6
 expensive 27:20
 experience 15:6 20:8
 37:17
 expressed 29:16
 extra 7:16 14:19 16:7
 16:10 19:2

F

F-R-A-N-K-E-L 26:12
 face 32:9,14
 fact 7:19 9:14 30:5,7
 32:10,18 33:5,8
 factor 17:8 40:6
 fair 16:11,16 20:19
 23:14 30:3,4
 fairly 16:9
 far 19:5 25:8 29:5
 fare 3:17 7:2,3,3,6 9:1
 9:18 15:9,16 18:12
 19:13 25:3,4 26:19
 27:4,5 28:5 30:12
 33:4 39:9 40:13,19
 fares 8:18 25:12 26:16
 fast- 11:12
 fax 22:14
 feasible 17:22
 fee 14:16 15:17,19 16:7
 16:10 20:10,13,15
 23:2,4,21
 feedback 3:6,7 24:21
 fees 15:17 20:7
 felons 35:5
 felt 30:4
 field 26:22
 fight 27:11
 fighting 38:6
 final 3:3 5:9 16:20
 Finally 14:17
 find 27:4 36:16
 fine 35:10
 first 11:2 14:13 15:7
 23:1 31:15,21 32:6
 38:17 40:20
 five 32:11
 fixed 17:10
 fleet 9:13 13:14
 floated 21:2
 floating 30:22
 flood 32:9
 floor 17:14,22 18:10,15
 floors 18:12

flow 19:21
flowing 19:14
focus 10:11
followed 25:19
following 35:15
for- 20:12
for-hire 1:1,10 2:6,17
 3:4,21 10:6 11:10,12
 12:4,5 13:5,8,17,22
 14:11,14,15,17,21
 15:11 16:17,22 17:6
 17:11,15,17 18:7,17
 23:6
forward 38:12
four 11:6 24:7 39:22
 40:8
frame 6:4
France 27:6
Frankel 26:6,11,11,15
 28:21 29:5 31:4
free 6:9 40:21
Friday 1:7 2:9 41:12
fueling 17:11
future 13:18 25:10

G

general 1:3,19 33:21
generated 14:13
gentleman 24:9,10
 31:19 32:3 38:12
getting 5:16 9:6 20:18
give 4:4 15:8 34:1,20
given 19:1 32:9,18
giving 21:11 40:18
grant 14:1,4
grantees 14:8
grip 29:17
group 21:22
groups 3:22
growth 12:15 17:11
guess 29:8

H

hailed 29:14
hails 6:9
half 37:4
hands 24:7 26:16
happen 7:13
hear 4:14 38:18
heard 22:8 29:2 30:15
hearing 1:5,11 2:4,7 3:5
 3:7,13,18 11:2,4,6,7,8
 11:15,22
heavily 32:19 33:14
held 11:3
Hello 36:2
help 8:10 23:19
helpful 31:2 35:10

high 15:19 30:15
higher 18:4
hire 20:13 35:3,4
hit 26:20
hold 3:5 11:15,22
hope 41:13
hopefully 21:2
hotel 39:21
hour 5:9,9 8:13 9:9
 13:15
hourly 8:14 40:16
hours 8:3
huge 8:15 40:8,8
Hungary 27:6
hybrid 36:20

I

ID 32:9,14
idea 21:1 27:14 28:4,7
 28:13,17 30:17,22
 39:5,16 40:17
ideas 22:9,9
immediately 25:21
impacted 23:11,12
impacting 12:1
implemented 3:12
 18:22
important 11:22 17:7
 21:14 40:3
improving 36:19
inadvertently 5:1,8 9:21
incentive 7:9,13
incentivizes 15:19
including 3:22 4:3
 34:10
income 13:13 14:21
 15:2,3 32:11
income-wise 32:10
incomes 13:18
incompatible 16:16
increase 5:19 6:5 7:2
 8:6 13:9 14:12,18
 15:4,6,9,16 16:2,8
 23:14,15,18 25:17
 26:1 36:5 37:21 38:3
 39:5,9,19 40:11,18
increased 5:8 12:20,22
 13:4,15,20 14:20
increases 16:3,3
increasing 25:3 39:14
Independent 38:16
indicate 30:18
industries 29:19
industry 3:15 10:10
 11:19 13:2,13 16:22
 18:6 23:7
information 21:17
inherent 17:15

initial 21:6
initiatives 14:1
injury 16:3 20:21
input 12:12
inquiries 5:17
inspection 40:4,6
insurance 34:8 35:1,2
interest 3:15 18:9
International 27:13
intervention 18:16
invite 2:12
issue 3:8
issues 23:19 33:9
issuing 32:9
it'd 29:6
it'll 10:22 40:19

J

JAQUES 1:19
Jeffrey 4:8,12,17
join 2:13 22:2
JUANDA 1:18
June 11:5
jurisdictions 8:20
 27:15

K

keep 3:20 28:13

L

L- 26:11
lack 29:10
large 6:8 7:1 11:19 36:8
larger 16:17
Larry 24:8 26:11
laws 26:18
lay 35:11
leaders 4:3
leave 18:8
leaving 19:12,18
left 24:3 36:7,7 37:3
legal 9:11
LERNER 1:19
let's 25:12,13,16
level 13:11 15:19 26:22
 37:7
levels 15:19
licensed 12:19,21
limo 29:19
limos 27:3,16
line 8:4 9:14
lined 8:3
little 8:11 9:2 19:10
 20:7 23:16 28:17,19
 32:1 33:20
live 22:12
livery 18:4
load 16:14,19

loading 15:21
located 2:7
London 27:6
long 26:17
longer 13:14 37:12
look 7:4,18 8:12,17,21
 16:17,22 37:8
looked 9:19
looking 30:20
loss 17:4
losses 15:5
lost 37:5
lot 5:16,22 6:14 8:16
 21:3 34:9
Love 1:15 10:7
low 18:12 30:15
lower 12:4 37:15,22
lowered 38:5
luggage 15:21,22 20:10
 40:8
Lyft 8:18 26:21 27:12
 30:9 36:12

M

Madame 4:9
mail 22:14
main 24:22 37:19
maintain 12:6
major 23:19
majority 5:11 9:15
making 3:14 5:7 16:11
 17:17 28:1
makings 5:3
managers 4:3
mandate 12:6,13
March 5:5
market 8:7 16:16 17:10
 17:16 20:17 29:18
 32:14
match 15:13 38:20
math 27:19
matter 22:18 26:18 27:7
 41:16
mean 8:17 27:19 28:21
 30:2 36:7,8,19 38:20
meaning 21:8
meet 12:6,13
MEETING 1:3
mega-corporations
 17:3,9
member 10:6 22:3,18
 27:14
members 14:5
mentioned 38:18
met 1:10
meter 3:2 5:11,14,17
 6:14 15:18 30:19
meters 6:13 25:10

mic 31:22
microphone 4:14
middle 17:1
mile 7:7,11 17:20 18:14
 30:19
mileage 17:18,21 18:1
miles 7:15
million 12:18,21 13:1
Minneapolis 27:21 28:1
minute 24:5
minutes 4:5,18,19 11:1
 24:2,6,10,13
MIXON 1:18 4:12 24:12
 24:17 26:3,9,13 31:13
 31:17,22 32:5
modern 19:1
modes 20:9
modifications 3:11
moment 2:13,15
moments 28:9
money 16:18 19:14
monopolistic 18:5
monopoly 17:6
months 11:11
morning 2:3 10:19,20
 22:19 38:14,15
motives 18:5
move 26:19 28:4
movement 26:20
movements 27:11

N

name 2:5 24:13,15
 26:10 31:8,15,16 36:2
 38:16
nationwide 27:10
nature 33:21 34:20
nearly 13:4
necessary 5:7 12:13
need 4:18 21:17 25:13
 29:21,22,22 33:22
 35:6,12 39:4 40:1
needed 3:12 29:9
needs 9:18 30:10 34:6
negative 25:22
neither 20:12
net 9:4
never 30:4
new 10:12 17:5 20:14
 22:9 27:20,22 32:9,15
newer 36:21
nicer 36:21
night 36:11,12,13
normally 16:2
note 16:20 22:17 41:11
notice 6:11 11:7,14,21
 12:2 23:15
notices 11:6

notions 30:16
November 1:8 2:9 22:4
 22:13 41:4
NTS 21:10
number 12:15,16,19,21
 13:3 16:18 25:1,5
 36:8

O

obviously 29:18
October 11:8
offer 17:9
offered 14:6
offset 15:5
once 2:20 34:10
one's 5:11,21
one-week 11:21
ones 34:10
online 41:5
operators 3:17 12:8
 13:4,10 28:18
opinion 21:18
opportunities 35:13
opportunity 10:22
 12:12 22:10,12 24:19
opposed 9:21
option 25:16
options 21:11
order 4:10 24:8
original 7:2 9:20
originally 3:18
outside 8:19 37:11,16
owners 4:3 9:13 12:7

P

P 1:19
P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 2:1
paid 20:18 30:19
part 3:3,20,21 4:6,6,7
 18:22 20:16 29:18
participant 4:4
participate 14:5
particular 39:4
particularly 16:12
parts 3:19
pass 22:17
passed 14:22
passenger 14:19 16:7
 16:10,15 19:6 25:15
 36:18 37:6,8 39:17,19
 40:21
passengers 8:5 16:14
 16:19 19:3 36:7,10,17
 36:22 37:1
pattern 6:5
pay 18:4 33:7,12 34:10
 38:2

paying 29:13 32:19
 34:8,9,12
payments 34:9
pays 19:19
people 7:10 8:16 9:2,6
 34:21 39:22,22 40:8
percent 8:1 9:12 13:3,4
 15:9,13,16 21:9,10
perform 16:2,5
permit 14:18
perspective 20:18
pick 37:1 39:22
picking 8:4
pilot 14:1
Place 1:11 2:8
platforms 20:10
play 26:16
playing 26:22
please 4:9,13,15 10:17
 24:11,11,14 26:10
 31:14 38:12
point 20:16 34:13
points 31:21 32:2,4
policies 13:6
pools 37:4
popular 25:21
posted 30:20
potentially 23:5
practices 11:20
precedent 23:22
preference 15:7
prepared 35:15
presence 10:5
PRESENT 1:13,16
presiding 1:12
pressures 18:7
pretty 21:12
prevent 35:5
previous 12:17
price 15:6 17:1,8,14,22
 18:10,11,12,13,14,14
 20:5 35:8 37:4,15,19
 37:21 38:2,5,6,20
priced 5:1 12:10
prices 28:18
pricing 14:3 18:6 29:2,4
 30:12
Prior 11:5
private 16:17 17:11
 18:7 20:12
problem 39:3
proceeding 2:12
process 35:16
produce 13:12
profitable 17:3
programmed 9:10
programs 14:1,6
projections 13:19

projects 13:17
propose 6:10 7:4 23:4
protection 10:11
provide 10:17,17 11:21
 12:12 13:10 18:16
 21:18 27:14,16 33:21
 35:12 41:9
provided 3:8 12:2
providers 12:15
provides 12:7
providing 11:13 15:15
 20:20
public 1:5 2:4,7 3:5,16
 3:21 11:5,14,15,19,22
 12:11,12 18:9 20:12
 23:14,15 29:16 30:2,3
publicity 25:22
published 5:10 11:6,8
pull 31:22
purposes 23:10
put 10:10 38:6 40:1

Q

question 8:10 25:6
questions 22:21
quick 22:21
quicker 39:10
quickly 12:14
quite 6:8

R

raise 32:4
raised 31:19 32:3
rate 1:5 5:8,11,18,19
 6:3,11,18 7:7 8:1,6,13
 8:15,15,19 9:20,21
 11:4,11,13 12:3 13:19
 17:10,18,20,21 18:1
 19:3,11 20:1 23:4,14
 23:15,18 33:3,5 36:5
 36:17 37:6 39:14,15
 39:20 40:16 41:10
rates 2:18 3:1,2,4,9
 4:21,22 5:14 6:5 7:18
 7:22 17:2 18:4 26:2
 33:2
rating 21:8
readily 12:10
realize 29:12
realizing 9:1
reason 27:21 36:6 37:1
 37:19
reasonable 3:17 7:11
 12:8 18:10 38:5
reasonably 12:10
receive 24:20
received 14:2
recommend 13:16 38:3

recommendation 36:4
recommending 39:17
record 41:17
redistributed 19:8
reduce 15:14
reduced 9:1
reducing 9:19 19:18
reduction 15:12 36:6
reflected 19:2
regarding 31:21 32:7
 34:3
register 11:7
registered 3:20 4:5,6,7
 4:10 10:15 24:4 35:19
 35:21,22
registering 34:9
regular 6:1
regulate 29:7
regulated 28:14 32:19
 33:14
regulation 34:22 35:8
regulations 32:22
 33:15,22 34:4,5,17,20
 34:22 35:11
Regulators 27:13
regulatory 11:20
related 14:3,4
remain 18:2 22:12 25:9
remember 41:13
repeat 31:10 40:14
reporter 24:14 26:10
 31:14
represent 25:8
representatives 4:2
request 16:8
required 3:5 11:4 15:21
 34:7
requirement 11:11
requirements 13:9
requires 2:18
research 22:6 23:20
 31:2
resolved 17:16
respects 28:8,10
rest 33:16
restrict 39:2
restructure 2:5,19 3:11
 22:7
restructuring 33:4
result 9:4
return 18:12
reveal 41:9
revenue 9:5 13:20
 35:13
revenues 13:2,7 14:12
 14:20 15:4
review 1:5 2:4,19,21 3:3
 3:7 11:11,13 12:3

rid 33:15 34:13
ride 9:3 29:14 32:21
 37:4,10 40:7
ride- 25:19
ride-share 20:9
riders 25:15
rides 3:3 33:17
riding 5:20,22 37:5
risk 16:3 20:20
road 7:10
role 10:12
roll 19:1
Room 1:11
Royale 4:8 10:16,16
 18:19 24:9
rule- 5:2,6
rule-making 5:4,10
run 8:18 37:16
running 5:12

S

S-E-T-E-G-N 24:16
safe 37:17
safety 35:2
saturated 36:14
saying 38:18,21
Schaeffer 4:8,12,16,17
 8:10,14 10:3
scheduled 11:9
scoring 14:4
SE 1:11
seat 4:13 10:17
second 8:4 10:5,15
 11:15 14:15 32:16
secretary 1:18 4:9
 22:14 41:4
section 4:22 12:11 41:8
seen 6:9 32:12
sees 20:4
selected 14:8
send 22:22 31:1
sent 22:16
service 14:3 15:20 17:2
 18:4 20:19,20
services 12:9 13:11
 16:9,13 17:9,12,15,17
 18:7 23:12
set 2:17 15:18 17:18
 18:13 23:22,22 26:21
Setegn 24:15,15,18
seven 16:14
Shannon 1:10 2:8
share 22:3 24:4 33:17
 37:2
share- 32:20 37:3
share-ride 32:18 36:11
 37:12
share-rides 33:7

share-riding 25:2
sharing 25:20
shift 36:13
short 7:15
sign 4:10,15 34:12
signal 11:18
significant 12:11
signing 14:8
silence 2:13,15
similar 30:16
Simms 4:8 10:16,19,21
 18:20 19:11 20:3,11
 20:16 21:7
simply 22:13
sir 10:3 36:1
situation 27:17 30:7
slight 40:5
slowly 39:7
snow 6:18 7:1,2,5,10
 9:18 33:5,9 40:17
solicit 3:6
solidify 31:1
solution 17:13
somebody 5:14 35:4
 37:18
somebody's 5:19
someone's 5:22
sorry 28:22
sound 17:13
sounds 27:18
sources 13:20
Southeast 2:8
space 39:21 40:10
sparked 5:13
speaker 10:5,16 24:4
 31:7 35:20 36:1
speakers 3:20 4:5,6,7
 4:10
specific 33:21
specifically 20:9 41:7
spell 24:13 26:10 31:13
spending 41:12
spent 17:20
STAFF 1:16
stakeholder 3:6
stakeholders 3:15 12:1
stand 36:15 37:16
standard 12:3
standardized 27:4
start 24:12 27:18 33:15
started 2:11 5:14 29:8
State 26:9
Station 7:20,21 8:2
 36:15
stays 19:15
steep 18:4
step 18:10
steps 14:12 16:1,2

stick 25:17
sticker 4:22 9:22
stress 31:20
strongly 32:7
structure 1:5 11:17
 13:19 14:3 20:5 26:19
 33:3 35:9 38:21 39:9
 39:20 40:13,19 41:10
struggle 36:11
struggling 32:10
studied 33:1
study 13:12,13,17
 32:13
submit 22:5,11 35:15
 41:3
submitting 35:16
subsidizing 17:4
sudden 6:2
suggest 15:12 16:7
 19:12,15,17
suggesting 8:12 19:6,7
 19:22
suggestion 25:6,16
 30:1
suggestions 9:8
Suite 1:11
supply 32:13
supposed 33:10
surcharge 14:15,20,22
 15:3,7,10,12,13,15
 18:21 19:5,6 23:8,9
 23:11,13,17,17
surcharges 28:6 29:11
surcharging 28:21 29:9
 30:4
surface 30:17
surge 28:8 29:1,3 30:11
 30:21 37:21 38:1
surplus 13:6 17:19 18:1
SUV 40:1
SUV's 16:13
sway 25:15
switch 30:9 37:2
switching 6:13
system 5:5 12:7 19:1
 27:5 32:20 34:10
systems 27:3

T

table 4:13
taken 11:17
takes 7:14
talk 12:14 34:21
talking 5:6
tasks 16:5
taxi 6:8 7:20 8:1,19
 15:22 18:1,6 19:1
 25:5,21 37:2

taxicab 1:5 2:5,18,19 2:22 3:1,3,8,11,22 4:1 11:3 12:6,16,19,22 15:14 27:13 29:15,19 33:16 taxicabs 12:8 14:13 17:18 26:22 27:3,16 36:9 taxis 5:12 9:3,7,12 17:22 20:8 26:1 37:9 37:14 tear 16:4 40:5 tell 20:6 28:19 38:5 41:8 terms 29:1 testify 10:22 testimony 8:11 10:18 18:21 21:22 38:9 testing 13:9 thank 2:16 4:16,18 8:8 8:9 10:1,8,12,14,21 18:19 21:20 23:22 24:17,18 26:2,3,4,9 26:13,15 28:15 31:3,8 31:17 33:18,19 35:17 35:18 38:8 41:1,11,15 things 4:20 7:17 18:21 28:13 30:16 35:1 thought 29:2 thoughts 9:14 21:6 22:4,11 thread 41:7 three 13:3 14:12 18:22 21:11 40:22 tight 29:17 times 6:20 29:11 38:19 tip 21:4,5,7,8,11,13,15 21:19 tipping 21:10,12 TNC's 6:7 today 2:9 22:1,8,10,20 26:7 35:14 today's 2:11 3:18 told 35:16 37:3 total 12:18,20,22 13:1 touring 8:15,15 town 7:20,21 tracked 11:13 traffic 6:5 training 13:9 TranCo 4:17 transparency 13:21 transportation 12:7 20:9 traveling 3:16 7:11 trends 13:18 trip 6:19,19 7:5 9:6 16:3 16:8 19:2,4 25:5 trips 6:2,8,8 7:1,15 9:3	12:16,18,20 13:1,15 17:4 25:1 trunk 14:16 15:17,17 20:10,13 23:2,4,21 25:7,14 39:21 40:2,3 40:10 try 40:1,15 trying 27:4 38:15 turn 40:5 two 2:20 3:19 4:5 5:3,21 7:17 9:8,11 23:19 24:5,10,13 31:20 32:4 35:3 39:13 type 21:3 35:8 typically 16:18 22:16	W W-A-H-A-B 36:3 Wade 1:15 10:7,8,14 22:3,18,19 wages 14:7 16:12 20:19 Wahab 35:21 36:2,3 38:10 wait 5:2,7,12 9:8,20 25:12 37:11 waiting 8:3 37:12 wanted 6:16 38:17 war 17:1 Washington 1:11 2:8 29:12 way 6:12 22:15 26:21 36:18 wear 16:4 website 41:7 week 11:9 33:9,11,13 weekend 41:13 weeks 6:15 weigh 21:3 weighed 21:4 welcome 2:4 31:18 38:10 went 41:17 wheel 35:7 willing 18:3 38:1 winter 37:10 wondering 23:2 words 24:5 work 6:1 15:21 20:22 32:12 36:12 39:21 working 33:8 worldwide 30:6 worry 40:12 wouldn't 16:1 19:17 39:20 40:12 write 30:14 writing 41:3 written 23:1	1 1.02 17:21 1.5 15:9 1.50 39:16,18 1.60 17:19 10:15 1:11 2:2,10 11:07 41:17 120 3:6,13 14.7 13:1 15 6:18,19 15th 22:4,13 41:4 16.2 12:21 17 11:5 15:15 19:18,21 20:1,3 18 12:18 18.50 6:20,22
U Uber 7:21 8:1,18 17:20 17:21 26:16,17,20 27:11 28:7,10,12 29:6 29:8 30:4,9 36:12 38:18,19,20,20,21,22 39:1 Uber's 8:3 uncompensated 16:6 undercut 18:9 understand 8:11 18:20 19:17 30:2 unfair 17:10 26:18 28:3 unfairness 17:16 Union 7:20,21 8:2 36:15 unions 3:22 unloading 15:22 unsustainable 17:1 usage 14:16 use 8:5,16 16:13 17:17 33:11 36:21 39:16 41:7	V valid 13:14 vans 16:13 variables 27:20 vehicle 3:21 6:3 10:6 16:22 17:11,15,17 18:16 36:21 Vehicle's 13:5 vehicles 1:1,10 2:7,17 3:4 11:10,12 12:4,5 13:8,17,22 14:11,14 14:16,17,22 15:11 16:4,17 17:7 20:12,12 23:6,7 36:19,20 versus 32:13 vision 36:13 Voice 41:8 vote 41:14 vulnerable 18:8	X Y Y-O-N- 31:15 year 12:17 years 2:20 5:4,21 9:12 13:3 18:22 32:11 39:13 Yonas 31:9,12 York 27:20,22	2 2 4:6 40:22 2.16 17:22 18:15 2.62 18:14 20 6:21 21:9 20020 1:11 2011 39:2 2012 6:18 2014 2:21 5:10 11:5 12:16 13:14 2015 5:5 12:19 2016 1:8 11:8 12:21 2023 2:7 2032 1:11 20th 11:5 2235 1:10 2:8 24 11:11 25 5:9,12 6:11 9:10,20 15:10 19:2,4,6,11,20 21:9 28th 11:8
		Z 0 06 39:1	3 3.25 19:3 3.50 19:13,18 20:1 30 4:4,18 11:1 13:3 15:13 35 5:2,9 8:13 9:9 40:15
			4 4 7:6,11,16 40 13:4 48 12:2 4th 1:8 2:9
			5 50 34:10,12 50-301 11:4 56 18:1 560 25:9

6
6,944 12:17
60 8:1
69 38:16
6th 5:5
7
7 7:5 40:17
8
8,094 12:20
80 9:12
801 4:22
801.7c1C 5:8
9
9,660 12:22

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing to Review
Taxicab Rate Structure

Before: DC Department of For-Hire Vehicles

Date: 11-04-16

Place: Washington, DC

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