

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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OFFICE OF THE D.C. TAXICAB COMMISSION

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GENERAL MEETING

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY,  
JULY 8, 2015

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The Commission met in the D.C. Taxicab Commission Hearing Room, Suite 2023, 2235 Sherman Place, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20020 at 10:00 a.m., pursuant to notice, Ernest Chrappah, Acting Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

ERNEST CHRAPPAH, Acting Chairman  
ELLIOTT FERGUSON, Commissioner  
BETTY SMALLS, Commissioner  
STANLEY W. TAPSCOTT, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

JUANDA MIXON, Secretary to the Commission  
JACQUES P. LERNER, ESQ., General Counsel  
MONIQUE BOCOCK, ESQ., Assistant General Counsel

C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

I. Call to Order . . . . . 3  
 Moment of Silence  
 Determination of Quorum

II. Commission Communications . . . . . 4  
 Commissioner Remarks

III. Commission Action Items  
 1. Vote to approve publication of . . . . . 7  
 Second emergency rule-making in  
 Vehicle-for-Hire Innovation Act  
 of 2014 -- approved  
 2. Vote to approve publication of . . . . . 8  
 Proposed rule-making for Chapter  
 5 -- approved

IV. Government Communication and Staff . . . . .12  
 Reports -- None

V. Public Comment Period. . . . .13

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

2 (10:18 a.m.)

3 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Good  
4 morning. Welcome to the General Commission  
5 Meeting. My name is Ernest Chrappah, I'm the  
6 Acting Chairman of the D.C. Taxicab Commission.  
7 We are located in Public Hearing Room 2023 at  
8 2235 Shannon Place, S.E., Washington, D.C. Today  
9 is Wednesday, July 8th and the time is 10:18.

10 We have two items for work today. But  
11 first I would like us to observe a moment of  
12 silence for those who have departed, especially  
13 Ron Linton.

14 [MOMENT OF SILENCE]

15 At this time I will turn it over to  
16 our Secretary, Juanda Mixon, for determination of  
17 a quorum.

18 MS. MIXON: Okay. Commissioner  
19 Ferguson?

20 COMMISSIONER FERGUSON: Present.

21 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Muhammad?  
22 Commissioner Smalls?

1 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Here.

2 MS. NIXON: Commissioner Tapscott?

3 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Here.

4 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Chrappah?

5 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Yes.

6 MS. MIXON: Chairman, we do have a  
7 quorum established.

8 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you.

9 Today we have two agenda items. One is to vote to  
10 approve publication of second emergency rule-  
11 making related to the Vehicle-for-Hire Innovation  
12 Act of 2014.

13 The second agenda item is to vote to  
14 approval for publication proposed rule-making for  
15 operating standards related to taxicab companies,  
16 associations and independents.

17 To put things in context I would like  
18 to share an introductory remark.

19 Today marked the 30th day since my  
20 appointment by Mayor Muriel Bowser. I am deeply  
21 humbled by the opportunity to not only speak for  
22 the Commission and the Office of Taxicabs but

1 also to work with all stakeholders to improve our  
2 industry.

3           Since my announcement, the most  
4 frequent questions people have asked cluster  
5 around what is my vision for the industry, the  
6 strategy for achieving it and how can a person  
7 can get an H-tag. Based on my previous  
8 experience with the Commission, as well as my  
9 observations and analysis of the industry, there  
10 is a need to continue with the evolution of the  
11 Commission in order to meet and in order to best  
12 offer a response to these concerns. My vision  
13 is to collaborate with all stakeholders to  
14 transform the Commission from a legacy regulator  
15 to an agency that is associated with innovation  
16 and excellent customer experiences.

17           In order to accomplish the  
18 transformation to meet the needs of the public,  
19 the Commission will rewrite Title 31 with a  
20 framework similar to the U.S. Constitution. This  
21 means rather than become overly prescriptive we  
22 will have guiding principles that should

1 withstand the test of time and I'll share with  
2 you seven of those.

3 One, The Commission will support an  
4 open entry system and accessible marketplace for  
5 people with disabilities; Two, an environment  
6 that fosters and encourages innovation; Three, a  
7 structure that promotes service to all, including  
8 previously under-served areas; Four, a  
9 technological environment that automates business  
10 processes and facilitates citizen engagement;  
11 Five, an environment that reduces the regulatory  
12 burden on drivers; Six, a Commission and an  
13 Office of Taxicabs that achieves continuous  
14 quality improvement and, Seven, an environment  
15 that recognizes the drivers and entrepreneurs who  
16 provide vehicle for hire services with high  
17 operating standards befitting of a world-class  
18 city as the District of Columbia.

19 The Panel on Industry has begun the  
20 work on reviewing the issues pertaining to H-tags  
21 and will conduct their public hearing next week  
22 on Thursday, July 15th. This will afford those

1 interested the opportunity to express their  
2 concerns and the Panel will develop  
3 recommendations for the Commission to resolve  
4 this matter once and for all.

5 I intend to approach each challenge  
6 determined to seek solutions, understanding that  
7 all resolutions will not satisfy all parties.  
8 However, the results are meant to service the  
9 customers' best interests and meet the public's  
10 demand for high quality service. As you and I  
11 both know, the public or a member of the public,  
12 has a choice of transportation options beyond one  
13 mode, beyond taxi, beyond limousine, beyond a  
14 private for-hire vehicle, beyond bikes, beyond  
15 Metro. All these modes comprise one ecosystem.

16 Thus, it is appropriate for a  
17 regulator, the driver, the company, and all value  
18 added service providers such as meter shops, to  
19 be aware of the broader mobility ecosystem and  
20 account for these choices to strengthen our  
21 industry. There is a reason D.C. has become a  
22 hotbed for transportation innovation and I look

1 forward to working with you all.

2 Now let us proceed with the two agenda  
3 items. I'll turn it over to Jacques Lerner our  
4 general counsel to describe what we have to do.

5 MR. LERNER: Thank you. Item 1 for  
6 action items is a notice of a second emergency  
7 rule-making to conform Title 31 to the  
8 requirements of the Vehicle-for-Hire Innovation  
9 Act of 2014. An original emergency was issued in  
10 March; the proposed rules are still pending and,  
11 given the Title must conform with the law, this  
12 is simply to continue the emergency through the  
13 end of that period.

14 The original emergency would expire  
15 this week, July 10th, this would continue the  
16 emergency through November 5th and in the  
17 meantime the proposed rules we expect will be  
18 published in the Register and we encourage all  
19 parties to submit public comments during the  
20 comment period once it opens. It will be a 30-  
21 day period from when it's published and again we  
22 encourage you to provide comments on this

1 important very large rule-making.

2 Item 2 under action items is a  
3 proposed rule-making. This would amend Chapter 5  
4 to enhance customer service standards and  
5 establish some parity among owners in the taxicab  
6 industry.

7 Some of the major pieces are  
8 independent owner operators would be required to  
9 obtain annual certificates of operating annual  
10 certificates of operating authority which would  
11 require them to provide a minimal amount of  
12 information about themselves and about their  
13 vehicles to ensure that that information is  
14 annually updated with the office, including their  
15 VIN number.

16 Make sure also that they now will have  
17 24 hour customer service available just like  
18 other owners in the industry consisting of  
19 companies. And in fact under this proposed  
20 rule-making, that standard would be put in place  
21 for companies as well.

22 Standards for independent vehicles

1 would include markings on the outside of the  
2 vehicles to make sure that they have the  
3 information that's generally on them now but that  
4 they are there, that they are clear, prominent  
5 and that they include a customer service phone  
6 number on the door.

7 Additional standards would be imposed  
8 on companies and associations, two of the most  
9 prominent being 24-hour customer service as I  
10 mentioned and improvements in data systems to  
11 ensure that systems are now providing data to the  
12 office and that they're not walked in or given on  
13 paper as they had been I guess many years ago.  
14 But that all companies provide this in an  
15 efficient and cost-effective means to the Office  
16 of Taxicabs.

17 In addition, to promote some fluidity  
18 in the industry, allow independent owners when  
19 they part company with associations or fleets,  
20 that when they do that, if there's any dispute,  
21 they can come to the Commission and participate  
22 in voluntary mediation about whether one party

1 owes the other party money, or something like  
2 that, in order to encourage that and make it go  
3 smoothly, that would be not binding but it would  
4 be a way to encourage fluidity and  
5 competitiveness within the industry and improve  
6 customer service.

7 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Do any of  
8 the commissioners have questions or comments  
9 regarding the first agenda item? Do I have a  
10 motion to call the item 1 for votes?

11 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Motion--

12 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Second.

13 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Secretary?

14 MS. MIXON: Okay. We are ready for  
15 the vote. I will call your name and please tell  
16 me yes, no or abstain. Commissioner Ferguson?

17 COMMISSIONER FERGUSON: Yes.

18 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Muhammad?  
19 Commissioner Smalls?

20 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Yes.

21 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Tapscott?

22 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes.

1 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Chrappah?

2 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Yes.

3 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Chrappah, we  
4 have four yes. The item has passed.

5 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you.

6 Item 2. Do any of the commissioners have  
7 questions or comments? Do I have a motion to  
8 call the item 2 for vote?

9 COMMISSIONER FERGUSON: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Second.

11 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Secretary?

12 MS. MIXON: Again, I will call your  
13 name, tell me your vote. Commissioner Ferguson?

14 COMMISSIONER FERGUSON: Yes.

15 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Muhammad?  
16 Commissioner Smalls?

17 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Yes.

18 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Tapscott?

19 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes.

20 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Chrappah?

21 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Yes.

22 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Chrappah, we

1 have four yes and the items have passed.

2 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you.  
3 So we have two items that have passed. I'm aware  
4 that we don't have any government communications  
5 or staff reports so I would like us to proceed to  
6 the next item on the agenda. Secretary, let's  
7 proceed to the Public Commentary section and  
8 would you please announce the speakers in order.

9 MS. MIXON: Yes. I do have seven  
10 registered speakers. I will call your names. I  
11 will ask you to bring your written statement to  
12 me so that I can distribute it to the Commission  
13 members. You will have five minutes to speak.  
14 We are going to keep on time. I will tell you  
15 when it's one minute, then I will tell you when  
16 your time has ended.

17 When you approach the podium please  
18 lean into the microphone and sign the public  
19 witness list. First on the list is Mr. Ron  
20 Bethea. And sir do you have your copies?

21 MR. BETHEA: Because of the short  
22 notice of my response to Commissioner Ernest

1 Chrappah, I did not have an opportunity to do  
2 anything but email him my response which was a  
3 letter that I will read and I will provide you  
4 with a copy that you can make copies for the  
5 members of the Commission. I apologize this  
6 morning but it was a short turnaround because  
7 this was supposed to have gotten to me by June  
8 26th and I didn't get the letter that was written  
9 till July 1st.

10 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Mr.

11 Bethea, would you please state your name for the  
12 record?

13 MR. BETHEA: My name is Ronald Bethea.

14 I'm president and founder of the Positive Change  
15 Purchasing Cooperative. We are a cooperative  
16 registered in Maryland and we are in the process  
17 of incorporating here in the District of Columbia  
18 as a minority LLC.

19 And what we basically do is work for  
20 the benefit of our membership, which are the cab  
21 companies and cab drivers which we hope in the  
22 future will become members of the Positive Change

1 Purchasing Cooperative.

2 We're presently now working with  
3 several lending institutions, such as Ford Motor  
4 Company. On May 13th Mr. Rich Gaskin of Ford  
5 Motor Company appeared at this hearing and  
6 testified on open end leasing which surrounds why  
7 I'm here today.

8 I'd like first to read into the record  
9 and summarize this very shortly, a response that  
10 I received from you Commissioner Chrappah,  
11 concerning our petition that was filed with the  
12 District back in March 2015 to provide commercial  
13 lease options for financing for wheelchair-  
14 accessible and hybrid vehicles to put into the  
15 taxicab limousine industry.

16 Whereas, the taxicab association  
17 company fleet owner/operator of a limousine  
18 license in good standing with the DCTC be able to  
19 register a vehicle with DCTC and the Department  
20 of Motor Vehicles while under lease contract with  
21 a commercial lease company. If the taxicab  
22 association company fleet and independent

1 owner/operator executes the buy-out option at the  
2 beginning of the lease contract, having the  
3 lessee's name on the title of the vehicle be  
4 waived if the lessee is entering to the contract  
5 to purchase a wheelchair-accessible hybrid  
6 vehicle to be put into the limo or taxicab  
7 industry in the District of Columbia.

8 In response to my petition, your  
9 responder was DCR812, government's filing on  
10 lease agreements with the Office of Taxicabs that  
11 require such agreements be filed within 30 days  
12 or entered into neither 812 nor the provisions of  
13 Title 31 previous to the lessee regulated from  
14 the taxicab from executing buy-out options of  
15 them under this lease should they wish to do so  
16 and because you're not prohibited from pursuing  
17 the desired course of action, rule-making would  
18 not be necessary. And while I appreciate your  
19 time and effort bringing this matter to our  
20 attention, the petition of rule-making will be  
21 not be given further consideration.

22 In the event that we have misconstrued

1 what you've requested, please contact our office.  
2 Sir, I respectfully submit to you that your staff  
3 and you totally misconstrued what we are  
4 requesting.

5 This is the letter that I emailed to  
6 you yesterday. This letter that has been sent  
7 clearly indicates that you and your staff have  
8 totally misconstrued what my organization  
9 requested in our petition. It addresses the  
10 issue of owners of taxicabs lease as in the D.C.  
11 taxicab industry and clearly makes the following.

12 We're not talking about vehicles that  
13 are already registered, sir, by owners which if  
14 you look under the filing of a lease agreement,  
15 the owner of each taxicab license in the District  
16 of Columbia and leased to any person that shall  
17 within 30 days enter into the lease agreement,  
18 file with the office of taxicab the following  
19 information--

20 MS. MIXON: One minute.

21 MR. BETHEA: Okay. There are about  
22 four items there sir. What we're talking about is

1 my organization requests that the commercial  
2 lease financing options for vehicles not yet  
3 registered, so what we're doing is providing  
4 financing lease options for those companies that  
5 are interested in purchasing vehicles to go in  
6 the industry. You totally misconstrued this.

7 We are looking at the fact that we  
8 have 21 companies who have been given a cease to  
9 do business in the District and their  
10 certificates of authority been revoked because  
11 they were not in compliance with the Taxicab  
12 Amendment Act.

13 What I have basically tried to do is  
14 to request a meeting with you, which was denied.  
15 I tried to get the matter registered to be heard  
16 because on May 13th, the former chairman  
17 rescheduled this amendment to be heard and voted  
18 on by the full commission.

19 What we have now is consideration  
20 given to this, and I don't know who gave  
21 consideration, whether it was the panel or  
22 industry or rates and rules which I was informed

1 you don't have a sitting panel.

2 MS. MIXON: Your 5 minutes is--

3 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you,  
4 Mr. Bethea.

5 MR. LERNER: With the chairman's  
6 permission, Mr. Bethea, I just wanted to let you  
7 know our staff has reviewed your petition and we  
8 are aware of your recent -- yesterday's I guess -  
9 - communication and we looked at that as well.  
10 And I don't believe that we've misconstrued what  
11 you said but just to make sure, I agree, I think  
12 a meeting would be helpful. So if you would talk  
13 to Ms. Bocock after the meeting we're going to  
14 get up something with you. Okay?

15 MR. BETHEA: Thank you.

16 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Next  
17 speaker.

18 MS. MIXON: Okay. I have Mr. Samuel  
19 Mekasha. And before you start if you would state  
20 your name, spell it please and sign in.

21 MR. MEKASHA: My name is Samuel  
22 Mekasha. First name Samuel is S-a-m-u-e-l and the

1 last name is M-e-k-a-s-h-a. First of all, I'd  
2 like to say good morning to the Chairman and the  
3 members of the Taxicab Commission. My name is  
4 Samuel Mekasha. I'm a member of D.C. Cab  
5 Drivers seeking a replacement H-tag, as its name  
6 suggests who are cab drivers who used to have an  
7 H-tag and simply want a replacement.

8 Before you today I would like to  
9 emphasize two things. First, all the cab  
10 drivers in our group got an H-tag. The Taxicab  
11 Commission decided to stop issuing tags and that  
12 decision was made in 2010. In fact, some of the  
13 members had H-tags for more than 20 years -- I  
14 emphasize 20 years -- before they voluntarily  
15 returned it. And some of them had even returned  
16 the H-tag and gotten a replacement for it  
17 multiple times before being denied that option  
18 starting in 2010.

19 With these tags we provided taxicab  
20 service as owner/operator of our own cab but many  
21 of our members did not operate as an independent  
22 instead of associated with companies.

1           Today, however, many of us are renters  
2 and others cannot even afford to do that.

3           Second, even though we have H-tag  
4 before 2010, the decision to stop issuing new  
5 tags was made, DCTC have applied that new rule to  
6 us. This was because the 2010 policy prohibition  
7 on H-tags are for new independent taxicabs.  
8 Especially it appears on the DCTC website the  
9 policy that is as of November 23, 2010, the D.C.  
10 Taxicab Commission will continue its suspension  
11 of the issuance of new independent taxicab  
12 vehicle numbers.

13           As I have said before, many of our  
14 members were never independent so the policy is  
15 not applicable. But even if we all had been  
16 independent, none of us are new so the 2010  
17 policy cannot apply to us.

18           You may be wondering, however, why  
19 return our H-tag in the first place? The answer  
20 is very simple. Returning the tags, getting a  
21 replacement, is a longstanding industry practice,  
22 plus Title 31 requires cabdrivers who are

1 associated with a cab company to return their  
2 tags right away whenever the cab is taken out of  
3 service. Part of the Title 31 is in Chapter 5,  
4 Section 546.2. In fact it has been the agency's  
5 pattern and practice for so long that our members  
6 who have got their tag more than 20 years ago  
7 knew that to be the standard. And the standard  
8 makes sense because as small business owners we  
9 want to avoid the fees associated with the  
10 business that is temporarily inoperable.

11 Cabdrivers normally return their tags  
12 when they are too sick to work or when they leave  
13 the country for an extended period of time or  
14 when we get injured in a car accident and cannot  
15 work or when the car breaks down.

16 MS. MIXON: One minute.

17 MR. MEKASHA: DCTC staff, however,  
18 would have us believe that 2010 policy changed  
19 the longstanding practice of issuing replacement  
20 tags but the change is true. The agency  
21 completely failed to give those who got an H-tag  
22 before the policy was created a notice of pending

1 change and that is entirely unfair as under no  
2 circumstance it is okay for a government agency  
3 to change the rules of the game in midstream.

4 With notice, each of us could have  
5 made an informed decision regarding our H-tags  
6 but DCTC stayed silent and as a result we were  
7 stripped of our chance to make an informed  
8 decision. Plus, under the current approach,  
9 when cabdrivers company was a requirement of  
10 Chapter 5 Section 506.2, DCTC punishes them for  
11 their compliance.

12 MS. MIXON: Okay, sir. Your time has  
13 ended.

14 MR. MEKASHA: Okay. I'd like to give  
15 it to you on the record. Thank you for this  
16 opportunity.

17 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you.

18 MS. MIXON: Okay. Thank you.

19 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Next  
20 speaker.

21 MS. MIXON: Ms. Carol Tyson. If you  
22 would state your name for the record please and

1 spell it.

2 MS. TYSON: My name is Carol Tyson  
3 spelled C-a-r-o-l T-y-s-o-n. Ready? Okay.  
4 Acting Chairman Chrappah and other distinguished  
5 members of the D.C. Taxicab Commission, thank you  
6 for the opportunity to offer public comment  
7 regarding accessible public for hire vehicle  
8 service in the District.

9 My name is Carol Tyson, as I already  
10 stated, and I am the Director of Disability  
11 Policy for United Spinal Association. We were  
12 founded in 1946 by paralyzed veterans. United  
13 Spinal is the largest disability-led non-profit  
14 organization, serving and representing the  
15 interests of more than a million Americans living  
16 with spinal cord injuries and disorders.

17 People with disabilities who reside or  
18 work in the District or who visit our nation's  
19 capital must have equal access to all  
20 transportation options, including taxis and  
21 transportation network company services.

22 I would first like to thank the

1 Commission, taxi companies and operators for  
2 their efforts to provide accessible taxi service  
3 in the District. Let there be no question, each  
4 additional accessible taxi on the road provides  
5 life-changing service to wheelchair users,  
6 granting convenient and at times their only  
7 available transportation to work, school,  
8 appointments and arts and culture.

9 Accessible taxis provide backup  
10 transportation when Metro elevators are broken,  
11 during inclement weather when accessing public  
12 transportation may be difficult or late at night  
13 when public transportation is no longer running.

14 Accessible taxis allow people with  
15 disabilities to participate in and contribute to  
16 everyday life. Accessible transportation ensures  
17 that each and every one of us, and those that we  
18 are care about, can remain active should we find  
19 ourselves living with a temporary or permanent  
20 disability.

21 United Spinal is grateful for the  
22 DCTC's recent announcement that it will enforce

1 to the full extent of the law the requirements  
2 that 6 percent of all companies' fleets are  
3 compromised of accessible vehicles. The  
4 enforcement sends a strong message to the  
5 industry but also to residents, visitors and the  
6 entire nation that accessibility is a priority in  
7 the District.

8 This is the right message on the 25th  
9 anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities  
10 Act.

11 However, United Spinal is concerned  
12 that drivers for these companies may pay the  
13 price of losing their jobs for decisions made by  
14 company leadership. In addition, non-compliance,  
15 and I understand the number is decreasing, by the  
16 companies that aren't complying leads to a loss  
17 of additional accessible taxis on the streets.

18 It is the United Spinal's  
19 understanding that there are drivers and  
20 individuals who would want to establish new taxi  
21 companies who would like to provide accessible  
22 service. We understand also that new tags to

1 operate vehicles are not being released so that  
2 existing taxi companies and drivers can remain  
3 competitive.

4 A study undertaken for the Commission  
5 concluded that 200 additional tags on top of the  
6 existing numbers could be allotted without  
7 causing harm to the market. United Spinal  
8 recommends totaling the number of taxis and non-  
9 compliant companies, releasing that number of  
10 tags, plus the 200, to independent drivers and  
11 new associations willing to provide accessible  
12 service.

13 The tags could be distributed first to  
14 those who have driven most recently or who had  
15 tags in the past, then to new companies that run  
16 an entirely accessible fleet.

17 We urge the Commission also to  
18 consider establishing a fund to support  
19 independent drivers and companies purchases and  
20 maintenance of accessible vehicles. Should the  
21 Commission set up such a fund, the D.C. Council  
22 could establish additional sources for such a

1 fund.

2 Finally, United Spinal recommends that  
3 the Commission maintain a list, available on its  
4 website, of operators and dispatch services that  
5 provide wheelchair accessible service. In the  
6 event that a wheelchair accessible taxi is not  
7 available upon request, passengers could be  
8 referred to that list.

9 This list would be useful for District  
10 residents and visitors who are unaware that  
11 accessible taxi service is available. In  
12 addition, we encourage the Commission to ensure  
13 that all operators and companies are complying  
14 with training requirements.

15 We recommend the Commission work with  
16 the Office of Disability Rights to create online,  
17 and in person when needed, training programs as  
18 soon as possible.

19 MS. MIXON: One minute.

20 MS. TYSON: United Spinal thanks the  
21 Commission for its efforts to ensure  
22 accessibility to vehicle for hire service in the

1 District. We are eager to continue to work in  
2 partnership with all stakeholders. We will  
3 continue to advocate for an accessible fleet,  
4 both public and private, that will benefit  
5 drivers and all who visit, live in and work in  
6 the District. Thank you.

7 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you.  
8 Next speaker.

9 MS. MIXON: Mr. Thomas Cambron.

10 MR. CAMBRON: I don't have a written  
11 statement but I'll be very, very brief.

12 MS. MIXON: Okay. If you could state  
13 and spell your name for the record and sign in.

14 MR. CAMBRON: Okay. My name is  
15 Thomas Cambron. You want my address? Just my  
16 name?

17 MS. MIXON: Just your name.

18 MR. CAMBRON: T-h-o-m-a-s C-a-m-b-ro-n.  
19 Okay. I'd just like to say I'm a licensed  
20 taxicab/limousine driver for the last 35 years in  
21 Washington. I'm a registered voter, property  
22 owner and taxpayer in the District of Columbia.

1           But anyway, first I'd like to add on  
2 to what Mr. Bethea said, you did very much  
3 misconstrue what he said based on the letter I  
4 saw that you responded to him. You mentioned  
5 nothing about a commercial open-end lease. You  
6 mentioned about a lease agreement between an  
7 owner and a driver; that was not what his intent  
8 was or our intent was.

9           Also, I'd like to say that I am  
10 someone who purchased a vehicle under a lease  
11 agreement. In 2008 leases were allowed in  
12 Washington and I was able to purchase my vehicle  
13 under a lease agreement which afforded me to  
14 participate in the industry, otherwise I would  
15 have had to pay the outset of a luxury tax which  
16 is about 8 percent which would have been nearly  
17 \$4,000 dollars for me. And also all of your  
18 benefits are 100 percent you can write them off,  
19 which makes it much better than if you purchased  
20 a car where you're going to amortize or you're  
21 going to depreciate.

22           But anyway, I'd just like to say that

1 without this lease agreement I wouldn't have been  
2 able to participate in the game and I'm at this  
3 point where I need to renew my equipment and the  
4 lease agreement is no longer available to me.  
5 But the understanding he was trying to convey to  
6 you was nothing to do with the lease between a  
7 driver and an owner. He said nothing in the  
8 letter he sent to you about a lease agreement  
9 between a driver and owner. He said commercial  
10 open-end leases which is what we were driving at.

11 D.C. for the leasing industry is the  
12 backbone of the transportation industry in  
13 America. Every major city in America allows  
14 lease agreements except D.C. and these lease  
15 agreements would help drivers find financing for  
16 all these requirements that you have mandated for  
17 the drivers and without them it's going to be  
18 almost impossible for these drivers to survive.

19 So I think you need to reconsider this  
20 petition. On May 13th the proposal was adopted  
21 to vote on it today, but somehow our amendment  
22 got tabled. So we'd like you to reconsider that

1 amendment and have a vote on it if you could  
2 because these lease agreements would help the  
3 drivers find financing which is nowhere  
4 available.

5 We have these lease companies here  
6 already in place ready to provide financing for  
7 the drivers to be able to purchase these vehicles  
8 that you've mandated. Otherwise, with this list  
9 I saw of these 21 companies who are going to be  
10 out of business you need to do something right  
11 away to help the companies and the drivers and it  
12 doesn't seem that the Taxicab Commission, or the  
13 city, has any interest in helping the drivers.  
14 Everything you're doing is killing us.

15 I mean even me I need to renew my cab  
16 and my limo and I can't do it because a lease  
17 agreement's not available, an open-end commercial  
18 lease, not a lease between a driver and the  
19 owner. But that's basically all I have to say.  
20 Thank you.

21 MR. LERNER: With the Chairman's  
22 permission, the petition was accepted. It was

1 voted as accepted, which is the normal process  
2 for a petition. It was then looked at  
3 preliminarily by my office which ultimately led  
4 to the response.

5 What you're saying here about leasing  
6 is not addressed by the rules. This is what we're  
7 trying to tell you, sir.

8 MR. CAMBRON: Uh-hmm.

9 MR. LERNER: There's nothing to be  
10 done because what you're talking about is not  
11 something that the Commission prohibits. You're  
12 free to--

13 MR. CAMBRON: I'm free to get an  
14 open-end lease and have my car registered in the  
15 District of Columbia?

16 MR. LERNER: There's nothing in our  
17 rules that says no, sir.

18 MR. CAMBRON: Okay. Because we were  
19 told otherwise.

20 MR. LERNER: I'm just curious. Who  
21 told you?

22 MR. CAMBRON: I mean that was our

1 understanding.

2 MR. LERNER: I'd like to know that.

3 MR. CAMBRON: I'm not sure exactly  
4 who it was.

5 MR. LERNER: And I apologize, I'm  
6 not trying to--

7 MR. CAMBRON: No problem. No  
8 problem.

9 MR. LERNER: That person needs to--

10 MR. CAMBRON: I don't recall because  
11 we've been through so much back and forth over  
12 this.

13 MR. LERNER: And may I suggest if  
14 you get together Mr. Bethea, please come to the  
15 meeting.

16 MR. CAMBRON: Yes sir. As a matter of  
17 fact, I was with Mr. Bethea when we met with you  
18 with Mr. Eric Rogers back before May.

19 MR. LERNER: I'm sorry, that's  
20 probably a couple of thousand meetings ago. I  
21 apologize. But we are going to have another  
22 meeting with you just to make sure we're on the

1 exact same page.

2 MR. CAMBRON: Yes sir.

3 MR. LERNER: So if you would like to  
4 attend we'd encourage you to do so.

5 MR. CAMBRON: Okay. Thank you very  
6 much.

7 MR. LERNER: Thank you.

8 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Next  
9 speaker.

10 MS. MIXON: Mr. Cyrus, is it  
11 Ariavand?

12 MR. ARIAVAND: Yes ma'am.

13 MS. NIXON: Okay. Just a moment  
14 please. If you would state and spell and your  
15 name and sign in.

16 MR. ARIAVAND: Cyrus Ariavand. First  
17 name C-y-r-u-s and A-r-i-a-v-a-n-d.

18 MS. MIXON: You may start.

19 MR. ARIAVAND: Yes, ma'am. I got  
20 this two months ago and I was called here about  
21 complaint 2013. I really don't remember like two  
22 months ago, 2013, and they wanted like a \$1,200

1 dollar fine. They brought it to \$500 dollars.  
2 Either I pay \$500 dollars or we go to court.  
3 Something happened 2013.

4 The next letter came again for me for  
5 complaint 2014 summer. They dismissed that.  
6 This mediation office I don't understand how does  
7 that work. Somebody got to do something about  
8 it. I'm not here for H-tag, M-tag, I don't know  
9 this thing. I just know if someone has complained  
10 against me, at least bring it 60 days three  
11 months, six months; 2013 I could not possibly  
12 remember what person was it I didn't pick up.  
13 Now they want \$500 dollars or go -- two of them I  
14 have now. I've got to go to 441 4th Street, N.W.

15 And I paid already here, I got \$100  
16 dollar I paid about two weeks ago because  
17 somebody says I used my cell phone while I was  
18 driving which cannot be. Like I don't smoke, I  
19 just don't smoke. I don't use the phone, that's  
20 why I never have hearing because anybody call me  
21 either I don't answer or just don't use the  
22 phone. But I have to pay \$100 dollar because

1 it's cheaper for me than put one day go to 441.

2 Somebody got to do something about  
3 this mediation please, \$500, \$600. We could pay  
4 in the old days we had jobs but really, really we  
5 lost our job. We make 30 or 40 percent of the  
6 money we used to make before.

7 A year ago I paid \$400 dollar for a  
8 complaint. Okay. But right now we don't make  
9 money, 70 percent of our money has gone to Uber.  
10 And I don't blame anybody here. Nobody in the  
11 office, no one. That was City Council took our  
12 job, give it to the Uber. These people want to  
13 come and drive taxi, they want H-tag, they don't  
14 know what's going on. Eleven or ten hours and  
15 you put and you really make \$70 or \$80 dollar and  
16 you go home. They have no idea what's going on.  
17 They wouldn't be jumping up and down for H-tag to  
18 come drive. They have no idea how bad it is.

19 But anyway please do something about  
20 this mediation thing. After one year, 11 months  
21 I cannot remember anything. I don't know how to  
22 defend myself. How am I going to say what

1 happened one year 11 months ago? Why did I  
2 refuse to pick up a person two weeks ago? She was  
3 so drunk, couldn't walk, and her husband keep  
4 saying this is literally my wife. And I say  
5 your wife literally threw up all over herself,  
6 I'm not going to pick her up. She puked.

7 You don't pick up people for so many  
8 reasons. I don't know what was the reason one  
9 year 11 months ago.

10 Somebody got to please do something  
11 about mediation, 60 days, 90 days. At least I  
12 remember something. I wouldn't remember anything  
13 a year 11 month ago. And the amount of money they  
14 want, \$500, and with the kind of money we make.

15 Thank you, sir.

16 COMMISSIONER FERGUSON: Out of  
17 curiosity. What is the standard for a complaint  
18 being filed against a driver and the statute  
19 that's in place in terms of timeliness associated  
20 with that?

21 MR. LERNER: The statute itself  
22 apparently is-- we're doing it fairly promptly

1 and the Chairman may wish to comment further on  
2 that. In fact, it's within a couple of days I  
3 believe, actually within 24 hours it's  
4 acknowledged and then I believe what is the  
5 resolution here?

6 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Yes. To  
7 go direct to your question. Complaints is  
8 something that I've taken a hard look at since  
9 June 8th. I've had conversations with a number  
10 of different people including (inaudible), some  
11 of the people who actually filed a complaint. And  
12 what I've landed on is very simple. There are  
13 certain things that the Commission can do,  
14 companies can do, drivers themselves can do to  
15 make the process more efficient.

16 What we're going to be doing going  
17 forward, which we hope to announce next week, is  
18 a redraft of the business process where a  
19 complaint will be acknowledged in 24 hours instead  
20 of the standard time-line of 48 hours. More  
21 importantly, we'll resolve complaints within 30  
22 days instead of the standard 60 days.

1                   We've tested some innovative  
2 approaches to resolving these issues and we've  
3 been able to eliminate the backlog in two weeks.

4                   So going forward we encourage a new  
5 process, okay, fair to drivers, fair to  
6 consumers, and restore public trust and  
7 confidence. More importantly, it will not be a  
8 mediation, it will be an alternative dispute  
9 resolution process, that will present information  
10 and give you your options. So these are some of  
11 the changes that you can look forward to going  
12 forward. Thank you for your time.

13                   MR. ARIAVAND: Thank you, sir.

14                   ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Next  
15 speaker.

16                   MS. MIXON: Mr. Massoud Medghalchi.  
17 And if you would state and spell your name for  
18 the record and sign in.

19                   MR. MEDGHALCHI: Massoud Medghalchi,  
20 member of the Teamster Union but I would consider  
21 myself an advocate for this business six years  
22 running. The name is spelled M-a-s-s-o-u-d, last

1 name is M-e-d-g-h-a-l-c-h-i.

2 Mr. Chairman, nice to meet you in  
3 person although I know you from background. And  
4 Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to  
5 testify today again.

6 I have a number of issues that is  
7 almost like beating a dead horse but I'm going to  
8 bring it up again.

9 Independent operators' interest is the  
10 only thing that has not been considered for the  
11 past 28 years I've been in this business. When  
12 the Commission wanted to get revenue, they gave  
13 H-tags. When City Council members wanted to  
14 create jobs, they recommended giving H-tags. I  
15 will go through a list of cities that the study  
16 was done by Park Service of Philadelphia when  
17 they wanted to determine how many cabs they would  
18 have per 1,000, which is the metric used in the  
19 industrialized world.

20 Atlanta, 3.3 cabs per 1,000. Las  
21 Vegas, 1. Philadelphia 1.1. Dallas, 0.5. L.A.  
22 0.5. Miami 0.9. San Francisco 1.8. Honolulu,

1 2.1. Miami. 0.9. It goes on and on. D.C. 12  
2 per 1,000. How did this happen?

3 Chairmen, before you sir, some of them  
4 before Mr. Linton actually sold licenses. \$5,000  
5 to \$10,000 dollars was the last figures we were  
6 hearing rumored.

7 We're tired of it. The down time for  
8 is over an hour for us sometimes now to get a  
9 passenger. For New York cabs it's five minutes.  
10 Everyone's interest gets put in before the  
11 independent drivers who are 70 to 75 percent of  
12 the actual industry in this city. Someone needs  
13 to take our interest into account.

14 Everyone thinks they're entitled to an  
15 H-tag. I have supported from testifying before  
16 Mr. Linton, before even the union had taken a  
17 position on this, anyone that unfairly lost their  
18 tag when they were visiting back home, if they  
19 fell sick or something and they had every  
20 intention of coming back to the business, they  
21 turned in their tags according to the law because  
22 they were not going to be carrying insurance for

1 two or three months, whatever. They need to get  
2 their H-tags back. That is it.

3 The only other industry that needs to  
4 fill in the quotas is for the handicapped  
5 vehicles. I was one of the first people to  
6 volunteer to go take training for it at District  
7 cab, I have my certificate. And I support fully  
8 the number recommended by D.C. cab commission to  
9 fill in that quota.

10 Anything beyond that would be lunacy  
11 because we don't have business out there. And  
12 everyone is trying to muscle their way in. You  
13 cannot reinvent the wheel. The reason why H-tags  
14 used to be given through cab companies was  
15 because they could determine the amount of  
16 business they had, which is demand and supply.

17 The only city that did it through cab  
18 commission was District of Columbia. And look at  
19 the disaster, the lopsided number of cabs per  
20 thousand people we have. There is no reason we  
21 should have that many cabs per 1,000 people,  
22 especially that there's over 13,000 part-time

1 workers from Uber and all the other shared car  
2 riding companies that have come in.

3 MS. MIXON: One minute.

4 MR. MEDGHALCHI: As far as  
5 enforcement goes I think you should stop micro-  
6 managing and that's why you have such a backlog  
7 on all these drivers that are crying and  
8 screaming about mediation and everything. I  
9 think you should leave some of the enforcement to  
10 the companies, just like HR departments do in any  
11 major company, deal with their own employees and  
12 have certain set up standards that you will hold  
13 the companies responsible for.

14 Beyond that point, whatever you  
15 determine that has to be micro-managed I can live  
16 with. But you cannot micro-manage everything  
17 through one DCTC.

18 There are three officers that have  
19 been harassing cab drivers in 5-D. Names:  
20 Kremnick, Zapata and Sprague. I had my cab  
21 detailed the day I got stopped and we had made  
22 the record--

1 MS. MIXON: Your time is up.

2 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Thank you. If I may  
3 just finish this. I'm going to refer them to  
4 Department of Justice. However, we would like  
5 the DCTC for once to stand up for the cab  
6 drivers. These cops just go up and down  
7 Bladensburg Road--

8 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you.

9 MR. MEDGHALCHI: --and harass cab  
10 drivers. Thank you.

11 [applause]

12 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Next  
13 speaker.

14 MS. MIXON: Mr. Larry Frankel. Same  
15 procedure, state and spell your name, sign in and  
16 I'll start the time.

17 MR. FRANKEL: Laurence Frankel  
18 spelled with a "u" in Laurence. F-r-a-n-k-e-l.

19 MS. MIXON: Okay. Do you have  
20 documents?

21 MR. FRANKEL: No, just what I'm  
22 carrying.

1                   Good morning Taxicab Commission. I'm  
2 going to be like Mr. Trump. You have ruined my  
3 business by letting others sneak in and take it.  
4 You have raped and pillaged my family and my  
5 personal life because of it. There used to be  
6 8,000 cab drivers that you now have down to what,  
7 about 6,700? Everything this Commission does  
8 penalizes us in outrageous ways have gone for  
9 nine years. It's absurd. I'm out of business.

10                   What you do here does not translate to  
11 the street whatsoever. And I'll give you some of  
12 the ways. You just passed a bill where inside  
13 that bill reiterated there are no longer any  
14 independent cab drivers. No more are going to be  
15 ever made. You don't have independent cab  
16 drivers. You have 400 that are, out of 6,700.  
17 The rest, like myself, I don't even know who I'm  
18 employed because I certainly don't feel employed  
19 by me. I mean it's beyond, it's bubbling over.

20                   Now the second thing that you did  
21 wrong in the legislation that you passed is that  
22 you want handicapped vehicles. Well you just

1 passed a \$50 dollar fine for any handicapped  
2 vehicle that stops in a crosswalk. If you have a  
3 back-loading handicapped van, you must use the  
4 crosswalk for the individual and in many areas  
5 you can't get close to the curb. Even side-  
6 loading vans will have trouble against most  
7 streets that have bike lanes and parked cars in  
8 irregular patterns. There's no place to stop as  
9 a regular cab. God forbid what the handicapped  
10 will have to go through.

11 Another way you've penalized  
12 everybody, the Commission has held \$700,000  
13 dollars that was supposed to be granted to  
14 taxicab companies. You already lost a whole  
15 bunch of taxicab companies because you didn't  
16 inform that they could use it. In fact, most of  
17 you don't even know that you could use it. If it  
18 wasn't on the news yesterday, I wouldn't have  
19 known it.

20 Last year I said to Linton I will buy  
21 my own handicapped vehicle. Many of us are  
22 willing to but we can't. They stop us dead.

1 I think I've pretty much said  
2 everything. Oh, I have an item. From what I  
3 understand, Lyft, Sidecar and Uber are now under  
4 your control as of March 7th they became  
5 regulated. I want to know why they only spend 8  
6 cents in the tax and taxicab drivers spend 25  
7 cents. That's what you charge them. Eight  
8 cents.

9 [applause]

10 And on top of it, I'd also like to  
11 know if you're collecting it because you've now  
12 passed legislation that gives them three months  
13 to report. We have to report every day.

14 This is the kind of mess we've had to  
15 deal with because this Commission is  
16 irresponsible. I have to agree with Mary Cheh,  
17 it's time to close this down and become  
18 administrative because it isn't doing the job.

19 Thank you.

20 [applause]

21 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you,  
22 Next speaker.

1 MS. MIXON: Okay. Now are to the  
2 unregistered speakers and as it turned out we had  
3 some call yesterday after the deadline so I'm  
4 going to read your names. You will have two  
5 minutes to speak. It will be tightly regulated.  
6 If you do have a statement you can still give me  
7 your statement. So the first person on that list  
8 is Mr. Royale Simms. State your name and spell  
9 it and sign in then we will start.

10 MR. SIMMS: Royale Simms, R-o-y-a-l-e  
11 S-i-m-m-s.

12 Good morning, my name is Royale Simms.  
13 I want to thank the Commission for the  
14 opportunity to speak and voice my concerns about  
15 security, job security and physical security for  
16 taxi drivers.

17 Recently, the taxicab commission  
18 issued a notice that will terminate the operating  
19 authority for 21 companies for their failure to  
20 comply with a wheelchair-accessible mandate.

21 The citizens and visitors to the  
22 District of Columbia have a right to accessible

1 transportation and the DCTC has the  
2 responsibility to enforce the law. However,  
3 nearly 200 innocent drivers who own their  
4 vehicles co-titled with the companies are at risk  
5 of losing their jobs if the restrictions are not  
6 lifted in the H-tag moratorium.

7 If the company loses its operating  
8 authority, the title will become invalid for  
9 residency requirements. There's no ability to  
10 replace that failed company because it will  
11 require the issuance of a new tag from the DMV.  
12 Although this transaction is H-tag neutral, it is  
13 not allowed under the moratorium. Drivers are  
14 essentially trapped into the company that's  
15 failing.

16 MS. MIXON: One minute.

17 MR. SIMMS: The DCTC should allow tag  
18 neutral operations at the DMV.

19 Physical security is very important.  
20 On June 28th around 4:30 a.m., a taxidriver and a  
21 Teamster member was shot by his passengers. The  
22 police on Monday morning were searching the

1 blocks around 1700 East Capitol Street hoping to  
2 find a video of the suspects or a witness that  
3 could come forward.

4 Why is this taking so long? Even in  
5 the proposed ruling that passed today, there's a  
6 mandate that a safety device is compliant with  
7 Title 31 Section 603.8 and 3 by December 31,  
8 2015. Not only is that too long for a mandate  
9 that should have been required in 2014 but that  
10 section alone only refers to safety for the  
11 passengers. It's about putting the panic button  
12 in the back of the vehicle. But there's no  
13 safety device for taxi drivers.

14 There's no mention of cameras, there's  
15 no mention of a 9-1-1 sign, there's no mention of  
16 a dispatch system and there's nothing right now  
17 that protects taxi drivers as they do their job.

18 MS. MIXON: Okay. Your time is up.

19 MR. SIMMS: This needs to be  
20 addressed and it needs to be addressed  
21 immediately. Thank you.

22 [applause]

1                   ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH:    Next  
2 speaker.

3                   MS. MIXON:     Ms. Eartha Clark.

4                   MS. CLARK:     My name is Eartha Clark.  
5 I'm a D.C. resident and you have my statement so  
6 I'm ready to go. I will just sign the record.

7                   MS. MIXON:     Okay.

8                   MS. CLARK:     My name is Eartha Clark  
9 as I have stated. I have been a Washington, D.C.  
10 cabdriver for more than 30 years. I want to  
11 thank the Commission for giving me the  
12 opportunity to speak today and express my view on  
13 the need to create more competition between the  
14 PSP providers. I currently use Hitch PSP System,  
15 the bottom line is service is bad. The fees are  
16 high and it's not just Hitch, it is every PSP.

17                   There are only eight PSP providers.  
18 The restrictive regulations on PSPs have limited  
19 the independent drivers' freedom to contract.  
20 Additionally, these regulations have limited  
21 innovation and the amount of services offered to  
22 the drivers PSP are providing had bad service and

1 high cost to the drivers.

2 These regulations are designed to  
3 ensure that the DCTC receives the taxi surcharge  
4 tracked through the Smart Meter.

5 MS. MIXON: One minute.

6 MS. CLARK: This can be accomplished  
7 through less restrictive means. The DCTC should  
8 allow drivers to choose their own credit card  
9 processor and the rules should allow the drivers  
10 to remit the surcharge quarterly using the D.C.  
11 fiscal year calendar similar to rule pass for the  
12 DDS system if their credit card processor does  
13 not remit the payment for them. And I want to  
14 thank you.

15 [applause]

16 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you,  
17 Ms. Clark. Next speaker.

18 MS. MIXON: Okay. Mr. Nessibu  
19 Bezabeh? No? Okay. The next speaker after  
20 that is Mr. Mohamud Samantar.

21 MR. SAMANTAR: Well I can only have 2  
22 minutes but it's okay, I will take that 2

1 minutes.

2 MS. MIXON: Okay. Do you have a  
3 statement?

4 MR. SAMANTAR: No, I don't have it  
5 but I will state my name.

6 MS. MIXON: And spell it.

7 MR. SAMANTAR: Mohamud Samantar.  
8 M-o-h-a-m-u-d. Samantar is S-a-m-a-n-t-a-r. And I  
9 will write it down for you here.

10 I will say thank you Chairman. On  
11 behalf of these cab drivers, I think you see this  
12 hall is full for you, and they're expecting to  
13 have some treatment. They've been through a lot  
14 and they can't even feed their families. Some of  
15 them they come in like homeless.

16 And I'm telling you one thing. We  
17 love to work with you and as I told you when we  
18 have a meeting in your office, if your door is  
19 open, we welcome to these cab drivers to get  
20 their treatment right. They've been through a  
21 lot. They've taken it left and right. They  
22 cannot feed their family.

1           For example, if they are stopped on  
2 the street and they ask him do you have  
3 insurance? And well you know all the cabdrivers  
4 they have their insurance but sometimes they  
5 forgot it. They take their car out and they're  
6 given \$500 dollars--

7           The question is, if the limousine get  
8 that kind of treatment, the answer is no.

9           MS. MIXON: One minute.

10          MR. SAMANTAR: The only thing I  
11 cannot really tell you in 2 minutes, but I can  
12 tell you one thing, these cabdrivers I mean serve  
13 more than-- they're working hard. They want to  
14 get good treatment and I'm telling you that the  
15 last Commission we have, they treat us as trash.

16          So what I'm asking you is let us be  
17 able to get that right. That's the only thing  
18 I'm here. And on behalf of the cabdrivers, they  
19 don't get what they used to make. There is a lot  
20 of business open on Washington, D.C. so they  
21 cannot feed their family. And I'll leave it on  
22 that way. And thanks for giving me the

1 opportunity and I wish we had 5 minutes that  
2 other people did have. Thanks very much.

3 [applause]

4 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you,  
5 Mr. Samantar. Next speaker?

6 MS. MIXON: Mr. Isaac Goitom.

7 MR. ABSELAB: Good morning.

8 MS. MIXON: Spell your name and sign  
9 in.

10 MR. ABSELAB: My name is Goitom,  
11 Isaac. G-o-i-t-o-m. Middle name Isaac I-s-a-a-c.  
12 And last name A-b-s-e-l-a-b. And let me sign my  
13 name.

14 Thank you for the opportunity that you  
15 gave me to speak for myself. I've been a  
16 cabdriver for more than 20 years and I've never  
17 broken the law. I've never been in trouble with  
18 the law anywhere. And I follow the law. The law  
19 says if your cab is out of service you're  
20 supposed to return your tag before it expires.  
21 That's the rule of DCTC and the rule of DMV.

22 I followed the rule and when I came

1 back to get my tag I was denied. To me it looks  
2 like un-American when you follow the law you're  
3 supposed to be rewarded and not to be punished.

4 So although the Chairman said we're  
5 going to have a commission next week, since I  
6 have already signed it I just want to take the  
7 opportunity to express myself as a voice. I  
8 prefer to speak on the H-tag issue so I don't  
9 want to repeat myself, but what I would like to  
10 say in conclusion is justice delayed is justice  
11 denied. So we will need an option. Thank you.

12 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you,  
13 Isaac.

14 [applause]

15 Any more speakers?

16 MS. MIXON: Yes. I do have Mr. Abdel  
17 Wahab Hassan. So yes if you would state and  
18 spell your name for the record please and sign  
19 in.

20 MR. HASSAN: My name is Abdel Wahab  
21 Hassan. A-b-d-e-l W-a-h-a-b H-a-s-s-a-n.

22 Mr. Commissioner, I serve the city as

1 a cabdriver with my car since 2002 and on  
2 10/11/2013 I surrendered my tags because my car  
3 went out of service and needed an expensive  
4 engine repair. I was not aware that the  
5 moratorium on replacing H-tag was extended  
6 automatically from independent cabs to all cabs.  
7 And I wanted to abide by the rules that require  
8 me to submit my H-tag when my car is out of  
9 service and also avoid paying insurance for a cab  
10 not in service.

11 I never intended to give up my tag  
12 permanently, and in August 2014 I got a good car  
13 but the front desk employee told me verbally that  
14 DCTC no longer issued replacement tags.

15 MS. MIXON: One minute.

16 MR. HASSAN: On February 15  
17 Commission meeting I submitted a request to  
18 Commissioner Eric Rogers to get my H-tag back but  
19 I so far didn't get any written answer.

20 I congratulate you for your new  
21 leadership to the Commission and I would like you  
22 to help me get my H-tag back.

1           I have two kids, 5 and 7, I can't  
2 afford to raise them in the United States when I  
3 pay more than \$1,000 dollars a month for rent, to  
4 rent a cab. So I had to send them to live in  
5 Egypt and I suffer from being away from them.  
6 They are Americans but they are not enjoying what  
7 all American kids enjoy. And when I invite them  
8 the expenses go beyond my means.

9           Best of my wishes and success to you  
10 in your new leadership. Thank you.

11           [applause]

12           ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you,  
13 Mr. Hassan. This concludes the public  
14 commentary period but I want to address a couple  
15 of things and then I will come to you gentlemen.

16           As most of you know, I am not new to  
17 the industry. I have had the chance of working  
18 more closely with some of you than others,  
19 especially the taxicab companies and some of the  
20 drivers during my time here.

21           It's not by accident that I'm back  
22 here. Some of you already know I have taxi

1 drivers as family members. I come from a family  
2 where my uncles drove cabs, and they still do  
3 drive cabs. So I am not removed from the  
4 reality.

5 What I do know now, which I hope to  
6 bring to this industry, is how to grow their pie,  
7 their pie meaning how much companies can make,  
8 how much drivers can make, but there are  
9 lingering issues that we have to address.

10 As I mentioned in my introductory  
11 remarks, some of the solutions may not satisfy  
12 everybody. But if there's going to be a couple  
13 of measures for success, one will be the public  
14 will have better confidence in our taxi  
15 transportation, limo or anything that we do  
16 regulate. Will have better confidence in that.

17 I had a couple of things that I want  
18 to address head on because I think this is a  
19 great opportunity for you to know not only what  
20 we've done over the last 30 days but what we plan  
21 on doing over the next 90 days into the end of  
22 the fiscal year.

1           One is communication. It is great to  
2 have you here during the meetings but we have to  
3 do a better job of talking to each other, whether  
4 it's through email or letters to the Office of  
5 Taxicabs. Some of you have received email  
6 newsletters. For those who don't do email, if  
7 you have a phone that accepts text message we  
8 want to make sure that we have a correct phone  
9 number for you so we can send you notices about  
10 things that you should be aware or things that  
11 impact you.

12           Our industry is not just about taxis  
13 and limousines, it's much bigger. But there's a  
14 reason taxis still remain attractive to people  
15 and we have to figure out what that magic thing  
16 is so that we can deliver more services around  
17 that.

18           The second thing that I've had my  
19 staff look into is the fine structure that we  
20 have. I have the opinion that the fines we have  
21 need to change and evolve. We have to move away  
22 from excessive punitive measures to a framework

1 that provides an incentive for people to do the  
2 right thing. And, more importantly, move away  
3 from hitting people in their pocket as I call it.

4 We have fines around \$2,500, \$500,  
5 \$5,000 and I need some justification why we need  
6 to have that structure. If you look at the U.S.  
7 Constitution there is an Article that references  
8 there should be no excessive fines or punishment.  
9 We have to adopt the same thing for our industry.  
10 And not you make your money and it will go right  
11 out the door. That's something that I'm going to  
12 address.

13 Safety is something that I also take  
14 very personally because I don't want to hear a  
15 story about a driver who has been assaulted or  
16 shot or even a passenger. And in today's modern  
17 world there are technologies that we can use to  
18 make things safer for passengers and drivers.

19 In fact, in the proposed rules that we  
20 voted on today, there is a provision to address  
21 driver safety. It didn't exist before. So it  
22 didn't take me six months or 90 days to address

1 that. You spoke. I heard. And we started  
2 something.

3 More importantly, rather than say  
4 there's only one safety device that should work  
5 for everybody, we are asking the industry to tell  
6 us what is working for them. How should it be?  
7 Because when everybody knows you can press a  
8 button that would call 9-1-1 if somebody wants to  
9 take a very negative action, they'll watch you as  
10 you approach-- so we have to be very creative in  
11 how we address the safety issue because there are  
12 way too many drivers and passengers who have been  
13 involved in safety situations that could have  
14 been prevented.

15 Now we cannot stop people from having  
16 bad ideas, but what we can do is reduce the  
17 likelihood that when something happens it takes a  
18 long time to wait to get help.

19 Another thing that I've heard which we  
20 will address and we've actually addressed already  
21 but you may not be aware of is the idea of  
22 competition among PSP. If you make \$10 dollars,

1 you should get most of that money back in your  
2 pocket. But when you look at the net, that looks  
3 at the fees that you've given up, it begins to  
4 look like you're getting more like \$8 dollars.  
5 And in today's overly competitive environment, if  
6 we can do something about that we will.

7 We've initiated a process and we send  
8 notices to the PSPs about audits. They are  
9 prepared, we'll go over the findings and then  
10 we'll address all the gaps and we'll use that as  
11 an opportunity to make it more competitive. It  
12 may mean we have more PSPs, it may mean less. I  
13 don't know what the magic number is. But at the  
14 end of the day we'll look at how much money a  
15 driver walks away with and make sure that they  
16 get to keep most of their things after the  
17 administrative fees and reasonable fees are  
18 deducted.

19 So I just want to let you know I've  
20 heard it and we're going to do something about  
21 it.

22 [applause]

1           The last thing I want to also talk  
2 about and I don't want to particularly turn out  
3 of the industry's panel is the H-tag issue. On  
4 one extreme you can say anybody who needs an H-  
5 tag shall get it. On the other extreme, you say  
6 let's try to look at it in terms of the impact to  
7 the industry and a real need.

8           What the real answer is we'll use  
9 data, science, facts to address it. If you look  
10 at the Federal Reserve there's a reason it has  
11 made the financial system stable. If money is too  
12 easy to come by they adjust the interest rates.  
13 It makes it more costly for you to borrow and if  
14 people need to boost the economy they reduce the  
15 interest rates so we can borrow at a less  
16 expensive rate and they can spend.

17           That is where you see the creative  
18 financing, zero percent for 72 months. Over 20  
19 years ago you don't see zero percent for 72  
20 months, it was more zero percent for maybe 48  
21 months. It became 60 months and it gets more  
22 creative.

1           We have to take that same approach to  
2           our industry. Rather than say let anybody get a  
3           tag whenever they want, let's figure out the  
4           right balance so that you as entrepreneurs, you  
5           as drivers, you as companies can all make money  
6           because it doesn't help if we put in place  
7           regulations or practices that destroys the  
8           system.

9           So I want to assure you there's no  
10          better time to be in D.C. quite frankly. I took  
11          this opportunity because I see where we can go.  
12          And I'm asking you not only to be patient but to  
13          feel free to share your ideas. I may not be able  
14          to meet with anybody all the time but, at some  
15          point, we will meet and I look forward to working  
16          with you all. Thank you.

17                   [applause]

18          Madam Secretary, there are a couple of  
19          people who have a few questions. Can we  
20          accommodate?

21                   MS. MIXON:     Okay. We are going to  
22          be able to take three more speakers.

1                   ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH:    Okay.  I  
2   know he's the first one and then the lady will go  
3   next and then the gentleman.  After that just  
4   submit your comments on paper and I will make  
5   sure you get an appropriate response.  And please  
6   let's keep it to two minutes because sitting here  
7   you don't make money here.  You make money when  
8   you're outside.

9                   MR. FOLDEN:    Good morning.  First, my  
10  name is Don D-o-n Folden F-o-l-d-e-n.  Thank you  
11  for this opportunity, sir and I wish you well.

12                   But if you really want to look at the  
13  problem that you have right here, it's right up  
14  there.  This has been the problem.  Okay?  It  
15  hasn't been the taxicab drivers.  The Commission  
16  has been the problem.  So you talk about you want  
17  a better customer service; well level the playing  
18  field.  Everything you all are doing in here is  
19  taking money out of these peoples pockets but yet  
20  Uber comes in here every day and you all do  
21  absolutely nothing.

22                   [applause]

1           You understand?    As a matter of fact  
2    you can't tell me that you don't have illegal  
3    immigrants that all they've got to do is have  
4    insurance driving for Uber.    But you all do  
5    nothing.    And it's a goldmine for you.    Instead  
6    of you penalizing them, penalize these Uber  
7    drivers that are coming here putting them out of  
8    business.

9           And see this is the problem I have.  
10   This is a business base that you get taxes from  
11   that you would rather put out of business and  
12   you'll bring somebody in here that you ain't  
13   getting nothing from.    It makes no sense.

14                           [applause]

15           It makes no sense.    If you really want  
16   to do something, man, help us stay in business.  
17   And if you don't believe me, go out to the  
18   Stadium tonight, you can stand there and catch  
19   all of the Uber drivers that are coming from  
20   Maryland and Virginia.    Okay?    And from wherever.  
21   But they don't have the same standards as you do.

22           So my question is this: why do I have

1 to continue paying all these fees when I can go  
2 on the computer and I can make just as much money  
3 and don't pay you nothing? Okay? And that's  
4 what they're doing, man. They're destroying a  
5 legitimate business tax base and you all are  
6 sitting there allowing it. I don't understand  
7 that. I don't understand it, I really don't  
8 understand it.

9 And listen, man, I'm for free  
10 enterprise. I've been in this business one year,  
11 okay, as a limo driver because what's what I want  
12 to do. But when I sit back and look at people  
13 with handicapped tags coming up and picking up  
14 for Uber, come on. Come on, man. Come on.

15 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you,  
16 Mr. Folden.

17 MS. MIXON: Okay. Yes ma'am, if you  
18 will approach and as with all the others if you  
19 can state your name, spell it, sign in then we'll  
20 start.

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning to all.  
22 My name is Danlette Williams. D-a-n-l-e-t-t-e

1 that's Danlette. Williams is W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s.

2 That's my name.

3 I have two parts of this today. The  
4 most one I have is dress code. For we the women  
5 cabdrivers we are being harassed by the  
6 inspectors because of our dress code. They're  
7 telling us to wear a shirt collar over something  
8 like this. They're telling us to wear a shirt  
9 collar over our blouse what we have on. And a  
10 few of them and I got into, not the old  
11 Commission but the old inspector and team because  
12 the old inspector understood that we were ladies  
13 and we wear ladies clothes, except T-shirt and  
14 flip-flops.

15 But the new ones you've got, they're  
16 out there every day harassing us about our dress.  
17 My blouse, what part of the store you go in so  
18 much that you will find a ladies blouse with so  
19 much collar. So I'm begging you guys to please  
20 change your code for the ladies because we have  
21 to wear our dresses, we have to wear our blouses.  
22 We can't be wearing shirts because our clothes

1 are not made with collars.

2 Secondly, please let everyone has  
3 said, I had to credit \$500 dollars from somebody  
4 else to pay my rent. Because of what? Uber  
5 taking all the jobs. And we're paying you guys  
6 prices, we're paying this quarter, we're paying  
7 3 percent of a credit card, we're paying the 10  
8 cents, then we're paying the quarter. But yet  
9 we're not making money and Uber is out there  
10 taking everything from us. And we're not making  
11 it.

12 [applause]

13 And I never credit money to pay rent  
14 before. The past two months I have to borrow  
15 from people to pay rent. I beg you please.

16 MS. MIXON: Okay.

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Please do something  
18 for us. Most especially our dress code, please.  
19 And I expect to hear something from you guys so  
20 thank you.

21 ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you.

22 The final gentleman?

1 MR. ABRAHA: My name is Ziena Abraha.  
2 Maybe a little bit I have some accents.

3 MS. MIXON: Spell it for the record  
4 please.

5 MR. ABRAHA: Z-i-e-n-a that's the  
6 first name, the last name is A-b-r-a-h-a.

7 MS. MIXON: All right.

8 MR. ABRAHA: Okay. First, I would  
9 like to take two or three. First, I would like  
10 to ask you about the Uber. The taxidriver they  
11 have uniform color or dome light, anybody they  
12 can see it. But Uber they don't have any mark.  
13 So how do you control those people? Yes, last  
14 year the City Council when they passed they have  
15 to put the sign. But as a taxidriver we saw  
16 there is not even the U sign.

17 How can an inspector when they stop  
18 the taxidriver in front of the taxi, Uber when  
19 they pick up, the inspector they never ask the  
20 Uber from what I saw on the street. Or there is  
21 any (inaudible) DCTC inspector. I don't  
22 understand.

1           So still from New York tag, West  
2 Virginia tag, Ohio tag, still they work on the  
3 street. There is no sign. At this time or by  
4 this situation, my real one is going to expire  
5 tonight. This is what I call in the District of  
6 Columbia there is two governments. One  
7 government is public government because you guys,  
8 one government is corporation government, they do  
9 whatever they want.

10           So now my final-- it is in crisis. I  
11 have 2014 because DCTC--

12           MS. MIXON: Okay sir. Your two  
13 minutes is up.

14           MR. ABRAHA: Can you give me a chance  
15 to go on please? Anyway, we are united. We are  
16 united. Too many Ubers.

17           [applause]

18           ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you.  
19 Commissioners, anybody have any closing comments?

20           COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes. My name  
21 is Stanley Tapscott, commissioner. I sympathize  
22 what you guys are going through with Uber.

1           We cannot give tags but we're trying  
2           to issue tags and you go in D.C. and Uber's got  
3           stands on Minnesota Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue  
4           with people getting drivers. Giving free gas.  
5           And the citizens of D.C. cannot get a license and  
6           they're not making any money. We are not making  
7           any money.

8           So I know that we did not put Uber in  
9           here. The City Council did it and I don't think  
10          they should have done it, but they did.

11          And one other thing, I spoke to Ms.  
12          Cheh on Friday or Saturday and she questioned me  
13          about \$800,000 dollars that she's put over here  
14          for cab drivers. Do you know about it? Does  
15          anyone know about it?

16                 [Replies of No from audience]

17          ACTING CHAIRMAN CHRAPPAH: Thank you,  
18          Mr. Tapscott. We will address the issues as it  
19          relates to how to best promote wheelchair-  
20          accessible vehicles not in isolation. One of  
21          the things that we have to do a better job at is  
22          when we are addressing one issue we have to take

1 a closer look at the impact on other areas. So  
2 there are considerations that my staff are  
3 looking at and we will make sure that anything  
4 that we come up with is fair and it's also  
5 fiscally responsible. Thank you.

6 On that note the meeting is adjourned.  
7 Thank you, gentlemen.

8 (Whereupon, the General Meeting of the  
9 D.C. Taxicab Commission having been concluded,  
10 went off the record at 11:44 a.m.)

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In the matter of: General Meeting

Before: DCTC

Date: 07-08-15

Place: Washington, DC

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Court Reporter

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