

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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OFFICE OF THE D.C. TAXICAB COMMISSION

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PANEL ON INDUSTRY

PUBLIC HEARING

+ + + + +

THURSDAY
JULY 16, 2015

+ + + + +

The Panel met at 2235 Shannon Place,
S.E., Washington, D.C., at 11:00 a.m., Stanley W.
Tapscott, Chairperson, presiding.

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

STANLEY W. TAPSCOTT, Chairperson
CHARLES LINDSAY, Panel Member
ANTHONY MUHAMMAD, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

JACQUES P. LERNER, ESQ., General Counsel

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Adjourned

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

2 (11:13 a.m.)

3 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: First, I would
4 like to request to turn your cell phones off.
5 They may be disruptive, so we'll turn all these
6 cell phones off. And I really would appreciate
7 it.

8 First, we'd like to take a moment of
9 silence.

10 (Moment of silence)

11 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Thank you.
12 Good morning. My name is Commissioner Stanley
13 Tapscott. I am the Chairman of the DC Taxicab
14 Commission Panel on Industry. With me today we
15 have other members of the Panel. Commissioners
16 Mr. Muhammad and Ms. Smalls probably will be here
17 later. And Mr. Charles Lindsay.

18 The time is now 11:15. Sorry about
19 the delay. We had some things that we had to
20 clear up before the meeting was open.

21 We are in the Public Hearing Room of
22 the D.C. Taxicab Commission. 2235 Shannon Place,

1 Southeast.

2 Earlier this year, the Commission
3 directed the Panel to investigate the current
4 limit on taxicab vehicle license, commonly
5 referred to as the H-tags moratorium, and to
6 publish a written report with recommendation to
7 the full Commission concerning the moratorium.

8 To be clear, an H-tag is actually a
9 license provided by the Department of Motor
10 Vehicle when the Commission issues a vehicle
11 license under its own rule. The Panel was
12 directed to thoroughly evaluate all issues
13 concerning the moratorium, which dates from
14 January 1, 2006 to the present.

15 To do this, the Panel decided to
16 gather both written and oral comments from the
17 industry. With written comments received first.
18 The written comments were provided through an H-
19 tag information forum which was made available
20 from May 2nd through June 1. The forum allows
21 stakeholders to provide basic information about
22 their view on the moratorium and whether it

1 should be lifted and if so, why.

2 The Panel received over 1,100 forms
3 from the drivers and companies. And has now had
4 an opportunity to review the forms in order to
5 get an accurate sense of stakeholders view in
6 preparation for the public hearing.

7 Today's public hearing is an
8 opportunity for the Panel to receive oral
9 testimony on whether the Commission should lift
10 the moratorium on vehicle license. And if so,
11 whether there should be any limit or conditions
12 placed on new license.

13 The Panel expects to hear testimony to
14 DCTC license and market conditions affecting the
15 supply and use of the taxicabs in the District.
16 We are interested in receiving special comments.
17 Particularly on the likely impact of changing to
18 the number of taxi's licensed and typed of
19 vehicles used. And wheelchair accessible
20 vehicles.

21 The Panel will take all testimony into
22 consideration. But we ask all speakers to please

1 be specific in their comments today.

2 We encourage speakers to avoid
3 repeating what has already been said many times
4 at the Commission's monthly meeting and in other
5 regular forum. The Panel is well aware of the
6 common argument for and against the new vehicles
7 license.

8 So please try to focus on specific
9 items, specific issues, and share with us your
10 most original insight that others have not
11 already provided.

12 This public hearing is the first of
13 two that will be held by the Panel. The second
14 hearing is scheduled for July the 30th from 11:00
15 to 3:00 p.m.

16 The format will be the same as stated
17 in the public notice. Registered speakers will
18 have three minutes to speak. And non-registered
19 speakers will have two minutes to speak.

20 As you can see by the turnout today,
21 we have many people who have registered to speak.
22 Therefore we will strictly adhere to the format,

1 I can't speak today, aforementioned time limit.
2 We ask that you respect the timeframe so that all
3 in attendance will have the opportunity to
4 testify.

5 You are free to stay or leave after
6 you testify. However, because of the capacity of
7 this room is 91 occupancy, we ask that you be
8 considerate and leave so that others wish to
9 testify, that are standing in the lobby of this
10 facility, can enter this hearing room.

11 We will take a ten minute break, I'm
12 going to change that, from a ten minute to five
13 minute break. And that will give us more time to
14 hear other people. A five-minute recess every
15 hour, which we will announce shortly after we
16 end.

17 Finally, the record for this hearing
18 will be open through January the 31st. I'm
19 sorry, July 31st.

20 If you are unable to testify today but
21 would like your testimony to be part of the
22 public record, please email it to poi@dc.gov no

1 later than July 31, 2015. Thank you.

2 Thank you. We will now call the first
3 five speakers, and operators, to the forum.

4 (Off record comments)

5 MR. LINDSAY: Good morning. My name
6 is Charles Lindsay. I'm a member of the Panel of
7 Industry. I'm also a staff member here at DC
8 Taxi.

9 So I'll be calling the names. I
10 apologize if I can't pronounce your name, I will
11 spell it. But if that's you, please come. We
12 are going to time everyone. You have three
13 minutes to speak. And we're going to move in
14 that fashion. We have a lot of people speaking,
15 so we want to get to as many as we possibly can.
16 All right. So with that, let's get started.

17 First is, A-J-E-C-O-L-E, A-J-E-D-A.
18 Is Mister, A-J-E-C-O-L-E, A-J-E-D-A, here? No?

19 Youseef Baldi. Youseef, please, if
20 you would come to the front.

21 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Take a seat.

22 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. Samon, S-A-M-O-N,

1 A-Y-E-A-T-U-W-A-C-H-E-W. Okay.

2 Reshid, A-B-D-U-L-H-A-D-I. Please
3 come, if that's you, please come to the front.

4 Kehinde, A-D-E-R-O-J-U. Okay.

5 Mister, P-R-E-M, C-H-O-H-D-A. Okay.

6 A-N-D-A-R, G-A-C-H-E-W, W-O-L-D-E.

7 Okay.

8 F-E-K-A-D-E, T-E-S-H-O-M-E. If that's
9 you, please come to the front.

10 T-E-S-F-A-Y-E, A-B-A-T-E. Okay.

11 Tesfaye, Abate.

12 Ewnetu Gemechu. E-W-N-E-T-U, G-E-M-E-
13 C-H-U.

14 MR. GEMECHU: Yes, sir.

15 MR. LINDSAY: All right. Tilahun

16 Kassa. T-I-L-A-H-U-N, K-A-S-S-A.

17 Adel Becher. A-D-E-L, B-E-C-H-E-R.

18 Muhammad Rohman. Muhammad Rohman, R-
19 O-H-M-A-N.

20 Slim Baldi. Slim Baldi.

21 Mohamed Tarig. Mohamed Tarig, T-A-R-

22 I-G. M-O-H-A-M-E-D, T-A-R-I-G. No?

1 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Is that you?

2 MR. LINDSAY: Binku Jimma. B-I-N-K-U,

3 J-I-M-M-A.

4 Abed Temesgen. A-B-E-D, T-E-M-E-S-G-

5 E-N.

6 Shefer Mengesha. S-H-E-F-E-R, M-E-N-

7 G-E-S-H-A.

8 Sajid Sohail. S-A-J-I-D, S-O-H-A-I-L.

9 Tolla Hailu. T-O-L-L-A, H-A-I-L-U.

10 Alali Nabil.

11 PARTICIPANT: Sound. Sound.

12 MR. LINDSAY: Say it again?

13 PARTICIPANT: The sound. The sound.

14 MR. LINDSAY: Oh, I'm sorry? Can you

15 hear me?

16 PARTICIPANT: No, no. No. The sound.

17 MR. LINDSAY: There we go. Can you

18 hear me now? No. There we go. Sorry. Okay.

19 Alali Nabil. A-L-A-L-N-I -- A-L-A-L-

20 I, N-A-B-I-L.

21 Bhatti Shahid. B-H-A-T-T-I, S-H-A-H-

22 I-D.

1 Ayenew Mitiku. A-Y-E-N-E-W, M-I-T-I-
2 K-U.

3 Test Hailemarim. Hailemarim. T-E-S,
4 H-A-I-L-E-M-A-R-I-M.

5 Omisore, A-B-I-O-L-A.

6 T-S-E-G-A-Y-E, W-E-H-A-D-E.

7 Kidane Theodros. K-I-D-A-N-E, T-H-E-
8 O-D-R-O-S.

9 Hare Amber. H-A-R-E, A-M-B-E-R.

10 Okay.

11 Yonas Getachew. Y-O-N-A-S, G-E-T-A-C-
12 H-E-W. Okay.

13 That's all five. All righty, so each
14 person has three minutes, starting with the
15 gentleman here to my right. Introduce yourself,
16 spell your name. So, this is being recorded. If
17 you don't mind. All right.

18 MR. ABDULHADI: Okay.

19 MR. LINDSAY: And I will not start
20 until you spell your name. So that gives you
21 another 30 seconds.

22 MR. ABDULHADI: Okay. My last name is

1 Abdulhadi and --

2 MR. LINDSAY: The mic is down there,
3 sir. Thank you.

4 MR. ABDULHADI: My last name is
5 Abdulhadi, A-B-D-U-L-H-A-D-I. And first name
6 Reshid, R-E-S-H-I-D.

7 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. You may begin.

8 MR. ABDULHADI: Okay. I got six
9 points just to put like, why we need H-tags.

10 The first thing is the quality of
11 cars. Which is, if DCTC gave us H-tags for
12 everybody, we will have a lot of opportunity to
13 get new cars on the street.

14 Like everybody just like to buy hybrid
15 cars. And that prevents like pollution's,
16 everything. And also it's about this quality.

17 This time on Washington, D.C. is cars
18 are moving, like taxis are very old cars. And if
19 we got H-tags, new drivers, they going to buy a
20 brand new cars which is hybrid cars. And this is
21 my first point.

22 The second one is, it will be a lot of

1 tax payers if we have -- the D.C. Taxicab hiring
2 the drivers. There will be a lot of tax payers.

3 And my third point also, most of the
4 taxi drivers, like part times, the shifts are not
5 fulfilled. You know, all of like -- if you say
6 like if we have 12,000 taxicabs, all of them they
7 are not working on the same time. All have
8 working -- some of them work night. And there is
9 different shifts.

10 And if DCTC give H-tags, the shifts
11 will be fulfilled. And there is not any lack of
12 taxis on the streets.

13 And if there is a lot of taxis on the
14 streets, customers they get easily taxis because
15 they are not waiting, signing into Uber and
16 calling for Uber.

17 Why they are calling for Uber, they
18 got taxicabs on the street. They don't need to
19 call Uber's no more.

20 And my fifth point is, to get
21 applications. Applications is a new technology
22 this time. This technology is beyond for

1 everybody to get like access. Every customer
2 they get access by logging, this time younger
3 generations, they are not waiting taxis on the
4 street. Most of them they log into their cell
5 phone and waiting --

6 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir. I hate
7 to cut you off, but we have to move to the
8 speaker. Okay?

9 MR. ABDULHADI: Okay.

10 MR. LINDSAY: You were pretty good,
11 but if you have written testimony, you guys can
12 submit it to us. To the address, 2235 Shannon
13 Place. And the record is open until July 31st,
14 okay. Thank you very much.

15 So we'd like to move to the next
16 speaker. Please pronounce your name, sir.

17 MR. TESHOME: My name is Fekade
18 Teshome. F-E-K-A-D-E, T-E-S-H-O-M-E. I've been
19 driving taxicab for over 20 years.

20 Due to personal problems I've
21 surrendered my tag before the Commission made
22 decisions to stop giving out new tag. Now I'm

1 renting. And I would like to ask the committee
2 to give me back my tag for the following reasons.

3 As the number of new drivers is going
4 up, rental cabs are becoming very scarce. If I
5 lose my rental cab for any reason, I'm going to
6 be jobless. This creates a huge job insecurity
7 on me.

8 Taking into consideration the effort
9 of Uber on my job, working eight hours a day is
10 not enough. I have to work long hours to make a
11 living and to pay outrageous rental price.

12 I'm compelled to spend less and less
13 time with my family. Plus my health condition is
14 deteriorating due to lack of adequate rest.

15 After all, is that what I deserve?
16 After serving the city and the public for over 20
17 years?

18 These days it's obvious that the
19 taxicab industry is improving and growing. The
20 public is in hybrid or low-fuel consuming
21 vehicles state of mind.

22 Let me play my part for the expansion

1 of modern fleet and let me contribute my share to
2 meet the standards of EPS Clean Air Act. This
3 will help only if I get back my tag.

4 Finally, I would like to ask the
5 Committee to consider my statements and make a
6 favorable decision. Thank you.

7 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Next speaker
8 please.

9 MR. GEMECHU: My last name is, G-E-M-
10 E-C-H-U. The first name is, E-W-N-E-T-U. Thank
11 you officers for this chance.

12 I represent the group of 2009. We
13 took taxi training offered by UDC in 2009.
14 Paying \$375 U.S. dollars.

15 Usually in procedure -- we took the
16 first test and got our yellow card. Usually, and
17 procedurally, D.C. Taxi Commission used to give
18 the second test, or popularly known as computers
19 test, in two or three weeks.

20 But the Commission failed to do so and
21 put us on suspense from 2009 up to November 9,
22 2013. On November 9, 2013 we paid \$100 U.S.

1 dollars and took the test.

2 And to get the license, we were
3 ordered by the Commission, again, to visit some
4 five, six D.C. Government agencies affecting
5 payments. We did that and got the license.

6 After that we could not buy our
7 vehicle and get H-tag. That's an enigma to use.
8 And we are still on the second suspense.

9 We have some, three points on D.C.
10 website, as to the concerns. One is whether
11 there is market or not. The second is wheelchair
12 accessible van. And the third is hybrid cars.

13 As to the market, the success of Uber,
14 in a very short period of time, is lasting
15 testimony.

16 As to wheelchair accessible vans, from
17 the website, we have got that. Eighty-six have
18 been added to the corps of D.C. taxi.

19 And of their own will, drivers are
20 inclining to have fuel hybrid cars. That is the
21 order of the day now. So D.C. Taxi Commission's
22 concerns are just met.

1 So we ask or pray to Panel members, to
2 consider that we are on suspense from 2009 to
3 present. There are no concerns.

4 The market is there, wheelchair
5 accessible vans are already made, hybrid cars are
6 the order of the day. With respect to taxicab
7 owners.

8 So we pray again and again. And it
9 will remain, really, an enigma to us why we are
10 on suspense from 2009 up to now, affecting
11 different payments.

12 So if there are no worries and if the
13 worry of Taxi Commission is already made, we are
14 just -- will be entitled with the political
15 contribution of you officials. Thank you.

16 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir.

17 MR. GEMECHU: I have my documents, can
18 I --

19 MR. LINDSAY: Sure, we can take those.

20 MR. GEMECHU: Thanks.

21 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir. I
22 appreciate it. Next speaker please.

1 MR. GETACHEW: Hi, my name is Yonas
2 Getachew. Y-O-N-A-S, G-E-T-A-C-H-E-W.

3 Just like my colleague, Fekade,
4 mentioned, I surrender my tag way before the D.C.
5 Taxi Commission pass a new law regarding not
6 giving back the tag that we returned.

7 I returned my tag because of family
8 health problem. And I couldn't get it back when
9 I needed it.

10 But the problem is, even though we are
11 on a public service, nobody seems to care about
12 us. I mean who cares about the little guy. The
13 taxicab driver.

14 From the Taxi Commission, all the
15 police, the inspectors. Everybody here. The cab
16 drivers.

17 Why? We serving the public. And yet,
18 nobody seems to care about us. I mean we have a
19 family to support.

20 I mean, if we rent the car, most of
21 the rental cars are really run down. I mean been
22 on the street for a long time.

1 So out of the month, the whole week,
2 we spent in the garage to get a fixed our car.
3 If we don't get it fixed, we don't get a cab to
4 rent it to make a living.

5 We all have a family to support. But
6 the D.C. Taxi Commission's really, every time
7 they have a new law and every time we not really
8 aware of.

9 I mean, how are we supposed to know
10 that once we return, once we surrender our H-tag,
11 we don't get it back. Believe me, if you ask
12 anybody if they knew they wouldn't get it back,
13 they would keep it. They would just keep paying
14 the insurance because it's not worth giving it
15 back.

16 And yet all of a sudden you're not
17 giving our H-tags. How are we supposed to serve,
18 how are we supposed to support our family. I
19 have a 3 year-old-son. If my wife is out of her
20 job we cannot support our family with my income.
21 Because we're actually paying \$800 a month for a
22 taxi. With actually we spent the whole week

1 trying to get it fixed, our cab, to run.

2 I hope you have the heart and really
3 the wisdom, to give us back our H-tag so we could
4 support and have a healthy and really productive
5 public service. I think you for your time.

6 MR. LINDSAY: Our General Counsel,
7 Jacques Lerner.

8 MR. LERNER: Just from, sir, did you
9 mean that you have to wait while the rental car
10 is being repaired?

11 MR. GETACHEW: You see, most of the
12 rental cars --

13 MR. LERNER: I just want to know, make
14 sure I understand.

15 MR. GETACHEW: Yes.

16 MR. LERNER: Okay.

17 MR. GETACHEW: Because if you give it
18 back --

19 MR. LERNER: Right.

20 MR. GETACHEW: -- you don't get it
21 back.

22 MR. LERNER: Well right, because

1 you're assigned to a specific --

2 MR. GETACHEW: Yes.

3 MR. LERNER: Thank you. Okay, thank
4 you.

5 MR. LINDSAY: Yes, sir.

6 MR. MAHMOOD: My name is Tariq
7 Mahmood. Last name is, M-A-H-M-O-O-D. The first
8 name is Tariq, T-A-R-I-Q.

9 I'm working to 15 years in Washington,
10 D.C. And I have a serious accident. I'm in like
11 a -- involved, the tree fell down and ambulance
12 came to the accident after 15 minutes. That's
13 why I'm not working like one years. That's why I
14 returned the tag back.

15 I just request for the peoples, give
16 me my tag back. I feed my family. Thank you,
17 very much.

18 MR. LINDSAY: Yes, the speakers are
19 done. Please, you can excuse yourself.

20 And, again, I ask, we can't require
21 you to leave, however, we just ask you to be
22 considerate and allow others to come in because

1 there are a lot of folk that want to come in.
2 And as you guys saw earlier, when I called some
3 names, as some folks stated, they are outside.
4 We like folk to come inside, okay.

5 Finished your testimony? Thank you.

6 Okay. So I'm going to continue. Dawit
7 Berhanesdlassia --

8 (Off record comment)

9 MR. LINDSAY: Oh, you want me to start
10 from the top again? Okay. So we're going to go
11 back. It's my understanding that some folk who's
12 on the list were outside.

13 A-J-E-C-O-L-E, A-J-E-D-A. If you're
14 here, please come to the front.

15 Youssef Baldi. Youssef Baldi.

16 Samon Ayeatuwachew.

17 Kehinde Aderoju.

18 Prem Chohda.

19 Andar Wolde. W-O-L-D-E.

20 Tesfaye Abate. A-B-A-T-E. No?

21 Tilahun Kassa. K-A-S-A -- K-A-S-S-A.

22 Adel Becher.

1 Muhammed Rohman.

2 Slim Baldi.

3 Mohamed Tarig.

4 Binku Jimma.

5 Abed Temesegen. T-E-M-E-S-E-G-E-N.

6 Shefer Mengesha. Mengesha.

7 Sajid Sohail. S-O-H-A-I-L.

8 Tolla Hailu. H-A-I-L-U.

9 Alali Nabil.

10 Bhatti Shahid. S-H-A-H-I-D.

11 Ayenew Mitiku. M-I-T-I-K-U.

12 Omisore Abiola.

13 T-S-E-G-A-Y-E, Wehade, W-E-H-A-D-E.

14 K-I-D-A-N-E, Theodros.

15 Hare Amber. All right, we'll move

16 forward.

17 Dawit, B-E-R-H-A-N-E-S -- oh, that's

18 your, sir? Okay, excellent. Thank you.

19 Mulawu Kassa. M-U-L-A-W-U, K-A-S-S-A.

20 Saini Jaswinder. J-A-S-W-I-N-D-E-R.

21 Mohammed Choudhry. C-H-O-U-D-H-R-Y.

22 There's someone with the first name M,

1 they didn't spell it out, but their last name is,
2 C-H-A-U-D-H-R-Y.

3 Asmare Aemiro. A-E-M-I-R-O. It's
4 your last name?

5 And then there were 12 speakers from
6 the D.C. Taxi Cab Drivers that are representing
7 303 drivers. I think one or two, we'll hear from
8 that association. Please come to the front. You
9 will have five minutes to speak.

10 And that would be, I think the
11 representatives was either Reshan Reda, Aynadis
12 Teka, Ermias Legesse, L-E-G-E-S-S-E, Hykel Kemal.
13 Okay, we're five full.

14 All right, here we go. Okay. Okay,
15 so, Mr. Dawit, please, I think you were first.
16 Can you pass the microphone down, sir.

17 Giving you three minutes to speak.
18 Could you spell your name for the record please.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. BERHANESDLASSIA: My name is Dawit
21 Berhanesdlassia. D-A-W-I-T, B-E-R-H-A-N-E-S-D-L-
22 A-S-S-I-A.

1 MR. LINDSAY: Please begin.

2 MR. BERHANESDLASSIA: I've been
3 harking in Washington, D.C. since 1983. And I
4 had my tag since 2009.

5 2009 I had accident and I had to
6 return the tag. Now when the time for me to be
7 able to buy a car, I couldn't because I couldn't
8 get the H-tag.

9 The rental car was almost impossible
10 to get. Even if you get it, it's just
11 financially very hard.

12 Since I've been serving the community
13 for 30 years, I deserve to be able to own my car
14 and serve the community and serve my family. And
15 I want this to be consideration so I can get my
16 H-tag. Thank you.

17 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir. Please
18 state your name, sir.

19 MR. GIZAW: My name is Yohannes, Y-O-
20 H-A-N-N-E-S. Last name Gizaw, G-I-Z-A-W.

21 MR. LINDSAY: Please begin.

22 MR. GIZAW: Okay. I will read our

1 presentation. You know, given the meetings our
2 three minutes only, so --

3 MR. LINDSAY: No, you're given five.
4 The group is given five.

5 MR. GIZAW: Okay, thank you.

6 MR. LINDSAY: Yes.

7 MR. GIZAW: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Please speak
9 into the mic.

10 MR. GIZAW: Okay. Dear, Panel
11 Members, ladies and gentlemen. First of all I
12 would like to thank the leadership of this Panel
13 for giving us opportunity to express our reviews
14 regarding the issue of H-tag.

15 After going through the well-designed
16 two days training, the Commission qualified us to
17 be licensed cab drivers in the District.

18 This didn't take place free of charge,
19 but cost each of us a total of about \$700. Which
20 includes schooling, licensing and other
21 processing fees. This is okay.

22 However, we were not directed to a

1 situation that gives us hope and courage to enjoy
2 the business. In the state we are exposed to un-
3 exploitation that sucks our blood and breaks our
4 bones.

5 We have been instructed to rent cars
6 from companies who are left to do whatever they
7 want regarding manipulation of rent prices
8 anytime.

9 On top of that, the companies never
10 had the capacity and organizational structure to
11 provide durable cabs for rent and the appropriate
12 services.

13 Currently the rent is in the range of
14 \$200 to \$350 per week. And we pump gas \$30 to
15 \$40 per day.

16 The rules and regulation of D.C.
17 states that the maximum hours a driver can drive
18 per day is 13 hours. However, driving only 13
19 hours a day doesn't cover all the aforementioned
20 expenses and our living expenses.

21 Thus we are obliged to work 16 to 20
22 hours per day to support ourselves and family.

1 Mind you, in what state of mind will a driver be,
2 while driving 16 to 20 hours per day, don't you
3 think this situation could cause terrible
4 accidents that could hurt both the driver and its
5 passengers. This is resident of the unregulated
6 car rents, action of the car companies.

7 On the other hand, we drivers deserve
8 to have family time. Giving free labor to
9 unlimited profit making companies should end. We
10 should be given the opportunity to work for
11 ourselves.

12 Therefore, the solution for all these
13 problems is giving tags, H-tags, to cab renting
14 drivers who has a reason that would positively
15 change a lot of things that include customer
16 service, the environment and economy of the
17 Industry as a whole.

18 Currently we, the cab drivers, are
19 having great stress due to very open policies
20 that allowed many companies, like Uber, Lyft,
21 Limos and other private companies. And including
22 some individuals are using their own vehicles, in

1 which we are rental cab drivers are unprivileged
2 to operate with our own cabs. Cars.

3 The Commission qualified to license
4 cab drivers in the District. However, we are not
5 -- we have not choice to be in business, except
6 renting cabs from drivers, associations and cab
7 companies.

8 By paying about \$800 to \$1,200 per
9 month for cab rent. Twenty to 30 weeks -- a week
10 for PSP service credit card processing fee. And
11 vary from rent. Because of the rule you imposed
12 on us, to work with rental cabs, we are obliged
13 to work, as it was said before, 16 to 20 hours.
14 What was the main purpose of all that great
15 training we were given if we can't make any
16 difference in the customer service and safety?

17 Anyone can imagine that customers are
18 getting the poorest service because of the fact
19 that we are discouraged and abused, during who
20 doesn't even have family time.

21 Driver associations and companies is
22 that own H-tag have been complaining in protest

1 every day about their tough survival in the
2 business, because of the fact that other
3 competitors have been all their customers.

4 If drivers who own H-tag can survive,
5 what can be understood about us? How are we
6 expected and trained to work and subsidize their
7 life and families? Why don't we be given at
8 least the opportunity to work for ourselves and
9 compete with others? Why are we enslaved in the
10 Capital of this great nation known to be the
11 center of freedom?

12 Giving H-tag and face ID doesn't make
13 any difference in terms of flooding the street
14 with taxicabs. Because of the following reasons.
15 All newly licensed drivers are going to drive
16 cars that are not occupied by others previously.
17 All most all of the cars we rent and drive are
18 just purchased by associations from auctions and
19 individuals that never have been used as vehicles
20 for higher Industry of Columbia.

21 If we are given H-tag, we are going to
22 clean the street and protest the environments.

1 The environment of pollution, by giving service
2 with fuel efficient and safe to drive cars.

3 MR. LINDSAY: Mr. Gizaw, I have to
4 stop you there. You're five minutes is up.

5 MR. GIZAW: Okay, thank you very much
6 for listening.

7 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much.
8 You gentlemen are together, correct?

9 MR. GIZAW: Yes.

10 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. So the group gets
11 five minutes.

12 MR. GIZAW: Oh, the group is five
13 minutes.

14 MR. LINDSAY: So not five minutes
15 apiece, just total.

16 MR. GIZAW: Oh, okay. So --

17 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. So you were
18 speaking on behalf of the entire group.

19 MR. GIZAW: Okay. So --

20 MR. LINDSAY: I think I explained that
21 to one of your representatives who called to see
22 me, okay.

1 MR. GIZAW: Okay.

2 MR. LINDSAY: So I want to thank you
3 guys, we appreciate it. Thank you very much.

4 MR. GIZAW: Thank you for listening to
5 me.

6 MR. LINDSAY: Our next speaker or
7 person who will testify, is Fetige Koulibaly. K-
8 O-U-L-I-B-A-L-Y.

9 I think Tariq Mahmood already spoke.

10 Bilal Dolamo. Dolamo, D-O-L-A-M-O.

11 Rotimi Akinruli. A-K-I-N-R-U-L-I.

12 Ged Woledmedhin. M-O -- I'm sorry.

13 W-O-L-E-D-M-E-D-H-I-N.

14 Atua Thompson. A-T-U-A, T-H-O-M-P-S-

15 O-N.

16 Ewnetu Gemechu. E-W-N-E-T-U, G-E-M-E-

17 C-H-U.

18 Abayoli Orabisi. Last name, O-R-A-B-

19 I-S-I.

20 Oh, Bilal Dolamo, I think I said that
21 name already, correct? Yes, I said that name
22 already.

1 Abraham Demisse. D-E-M-I-S-S-E.

2 Abdulwahab Hassan.

3 Keder Aulgessa. A-U-L-G-E-S-S-A.

4 Aulgessa, excuse me.

5 Getinet Tiyiti. T-I-Y-I-T-I. Please
6 come to the -- if you hear your name, just please
7 come to the front. And when we get five we'll
8 begin.

9 Chouaib Bahoujabour. Last name, B-A-
10 H-O-U-J-A-B-O-U-R.

11 Emiru Gusu. G-U-S-U.

12 Mushtaq Gilani, from Icon Cab.

13 Gilani, G-I-L-A-N-I.

14 Khalid Alhsan. A-L-H-S-A-N.

15 Mohammad Akrem. A-K-R-E-M.

16 Elfadil, K-H-A-L-D.

17 Yohannes Hailemarian. Yohannes

18 Hailemarian.

19 Raheel Virk. Raheel Virk. V-I-R-K.

20 Sulieman Ishmal. S-U-L-I-E-M-A-N, I-

21 S-H-M-A-L.

22 Omar Jarmouni. J-A-R-M-O-U-N-I.

1 Tesfaye Gebre. G-E-B-R-E.

2 Abdiricak Kulmie. K-U-L-M-I-E.

3 Alemayhu, I'm sorry, A-L-E-M-A-Y-H-U.

4 Fanta, F-A-N-T-A.

5 Eyob Manyagdew. M-A-N-Y-A-G-D-E-W.

6 A-W-E-T, T-E-S-F-A-M-L-I-R-M-I-N.

7 Getachew Molla.

8 Abu Godo. G-O-D-O.

9 Maru Fenta. F-E-N-T-A.

10 Dawit Wulle. W-U-L-L-E.

11 Kwadwo Brobbey. Last name, B-R-O-B-B-

12 E-Y.

13 Gashaw Birbo. B-I-R-B-O.

14 Okay, there we have it. All right.

15 By the way, if you guys know -- excuse me. If

16 anyone in here, the ones that I've read, if you

17 know of the person that's outside, you know, you

18 can have them come in and let them know that

19 their name has been called. I'll speak to them

20 aside and we'll definitely take their testimony,

21 okay? Because we don't want to exclude anyone.

22 We want everybody to have an opportunity to

1 speak, okay?

2 All right, so we're going to begin.
3 Please, sir, state your name. And spell it out
4 for the record.

5 MR. TIYITI: My name is, last name, T-
6 I-Y-I-T-I. First name is, G-E-T-I-N-E-T.

7 MR. LINDSAY: Okay.

8 MR. TIYITI: Thank you member of the
9 Panelist. Today I'm going to testify upon three
10 points. I represent taxi for like some group of
11 the drivers. Before I came in we talked on some
12 points.

13 Ask, we ask you now to like -- we took
14 a test and example, for license, what saves us
15 the time.

16 When we take the exam and the training
17 at the time, that's expected from us. Like good
18 customer service.

19 But after we do the license we have so
20 many problems that limit us from giving like
21 excellent customer service.

22 One, the quality of the car we are

1 renting from the companies are not like
2 comfortable or they are sufficient for us to
3 like, to give service, the transportation.
4 Because many cars are like old and drive for so
5 many times, many years.

6 Inside have like some tears. They
7 have some mechanical problems. Even when the
8 cars have mechanical problem, when we went to the
9 company, even the company they really, they are
10 not, will accept us. Varied problem with the car
11 and it fixed easily.

12 For example, I give one. One, my
13 friend, he drive, he's driving for some company.
14 I won't tell you, I don't need to tell the name
15 of the company.

16 He asked to fix the car. The car have
17 like overheat for some many times. When he went
18 to the car company he asked them, they said, we
19 don't have money to fix for this problem, so if
20 you like drive, if you don't like, leave the car
21 here. There is none for him. So he has no
22 really option, he has to drive the car.

1 The other point, competition. I think
2 here, two kinds of drivers are here.

3 One, there are independent drivers and
4 they have their own car, they have their own --
5 they have their own car and they can drive their
6 own car.

7 The other one, rent a driver. That
8 means those who are new are renting the car. The
9 independent, they have like fuel efficient, they
10 have hybrid and they have like nice car.

11 Compared to us, our cab. But our cab is like, is
12 not competing with them. Because it has so many
13 problems.

14 I can give you specifically the
15 evidence, but for the sake of time, I can present
16 the evidence.

17 The other one, the equality. We are
18 not equal. Because according to the D.C. Taxi
19 Commission we are a driver. And we are equal by
20 the D.C. Taxi Commission. But we need equal,
21 like fair competition among valid drivers and for
22 us. Because valids have their own tag and --

1 MR. LINDSAY: I have to stop you
2 there, sir. You can, again, submit your written
3 testimony to 2235 Shannon Place.

4 MR. TIYITI: Okay.

5 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much.

6 MR. TIYITI: All right, thanks.

7 MR. LINDSAY: Next speaker please.
8 Please spell your name for the record.

9 MR. HASSAN: My name is Abdulwahab
10 Hassan. A-B-D-U-L-W-A-H-A-B. Hassan, H-A-S-S-A-
11 N.

12 First, thank you so much for this very
13 important mission for all of us. Major brother
14 supports open system. The current commissioner
15 support open entry system. But what we have is a
16 defective closed system. In the past, DCTC have
17 managed to maintain an open entry by opening the
18 licenses only when the city needed more cabs in
19 the street. And every licensee was able to
20 immediately buy his own car and operator taxi.

21 The DCTC polices was, with or without
22 intention, have created imbalance between H-tags

1 and drivers. DCTC supported issuing not just new
2 tags, and made the moratorium on issuing tags for
3 independent taxis, but also extended, without
4 warning, the moratorium to all taxis. Even some
5 replacement for H-tags.

6 And in this way, they shut down
7 completely issuing H-tags, accept for a few
8 temporarily and unorganized opening favoring
9 companies.

10 And on the other side, they increased
11 the supply of drivers without limitation. And
12 now we have a huge number of drivers and limited
13 cars.

14 The result naturally was more demand
15 for cars and more price hikes for rent by
16 companies. And the rent now is \$250, as a price
17 in Virginia, which used closed-entry system.

18 Number two, no available cars for an
19 army of new drivers and yet is still printing new
20 licenses. By the day, three.

21 Some companies are making more than
22 \$200,000 a month for just renting their cars and

1 their extra tags while drivers suffer just to
2 make a living.

3 Number five, companies have started to
4 be less caring in maintaining their car. They
5 are maintaining very, very bad cars.

6 (Applause)

7 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Hold your
8 clapping because you're interrupting the
9 gentleman and he only has three minutes.

10 MR. HASSAN: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: After he
12 finished, then you can. If you don't mind.

13 MR. HASSAN: Sorry. Companies have
14 started to be less caring in maintaining their
15 cars and less caring for the drivers and feel
16 secure. Because they have a long waiting list of
17 drivers and they gained huge money and want to
18 maintain their current imbalance.

19 The new DCTC practice have prevented
20 drivers from returning their tags if they have to
21 be temporarily or even forever out of service
22 because there is no system to allow them to have

1 it back.

2 More new and old drivers are quitting
3 because of lack of cars and rapid changes. And
4 drivers feel they are on the bottom of the list
5 of interests for DCTCs, DCTC, the solution.

6 It is never too late to recognize the
7 mistake and start in the right direction. I
8 suggest the following.

9 Open only exams for licensees when
10 there is a need in the city for new drivers. And
11 for now, stop immediately adding more supply of
12 unneeded licensees.

13 MR. LINDSAY: Sir, sir.

14 MR. HASSAN: Yes?

15 MR. LINDSAY: I hate to stop you, but
16 your time is up. Can you give me your name one
17 more time?

18 MR. HASSAN: My name is Abdulwahab
19 Hassan.

20 MR. LINDSAY: Okay.

21 MR. HASSAN: A-B-D-E-L --

22 MR. LINDSAY: Got you. I gave you an

1 additional 30 seconds. I gave you an additional
2 30 seconds. Next speaker please.

3 MR. HASSAN: You're going to give me
4 30 seconds?

5 MR. LINDSAY: I've already given --

6 MR. HASSAN: Okay.

7 MR. LINDSAY: Excuse me, I've given
8 you additional 30 seconds.

9 MR. HASSAN: Can you give me one
10 minute?

11 MR. LINDSAY: I can't.

12 MR. HASSAN: Oh.

13 MR. LINDSAY: Because as you can see,
14 the room is full. Thank you.

15 Next speaker please. And please spell
16 your name. Next speaker, go ahead.

17 MR. DEMISSE: Good afternoon, member
18 of the Panel on Industry. My name is Abraham
19 Demisse. A-B-R-A-H-A-M, Demisse, D-E-M-I-S-S-E.

20 I am a member of D.C. Cab Drivers
21 seeking replacement H-tag. Our members have
22 their own H-tag before DCTC decided to stop

1 issuing them in the fall of 2010.

2 Today we don't not have a tag. And
3 while we each returned it for our own business
4 reasons, as former owners of our own cab, we have
5 this in common.

6 None of us have an H-tag today simply
7 because we complied with long standing industry
8 pardon and practice. All because we complied
9 with Title 31.

10 Our membership falls into two basic
11 categories. One category is cab drivers who used
12 to be independents.

13 They returned their H-tag voluntarily
14 believing it was temporary because DCTC had a
15 long standing pardon and practice of letting them
16 do this when their cab was not in service.

17 In fact, some of our members had
18 returned their tag and secured a replacement
19 multiple times.

20 DCTC never told these drivers the
21 replacement tag would no longer exist. Because
22 DCTC did not tell them the rules would be

1 changing, these drivers were stripped of their
2 chance to make an informed decision with respect
3 to their small business.

4 The second category is drivers who,
5 while all owning their cab, are affiliated with
6 their company or association. These drivers are
7 required by Title 31 to return their tag into the
8 DMV whenever their cab is out of service.

9 This language can be found in Title
10 31, Chapter 5, Section 506.2. Chapter 5 does not
11 prohibit cab drivers who comply with its language
12 from getting a replacement H-tag.

13 Indeed denying these cab drivers a
14 replacement tag punishes them for following the
15 law. This is unfair and it lacks commonsense.

16 Do not punish us because we followed
17 long standing industry pardon and practice. Do
18 not punish us for having complied with Title 31.

19 A mistake, resolve this problem by
20 issuing a replacement H-tag to all members right
21 away. Thank you for letting me testify.

22 MR. AKREM: My name is Mohammad Akrem.

1 And I've been hacking in Washington, D.C. last 21
2 years.

3 And I have returned my tag due to my
4 taxicab was not very much good. But as I tried
5 to get back, I have so many problems.

6 And now I've been driving as a rental
7 cab driver, which is very hard to afford to the
8 rent and the attitude of the taxicab owners.
9 They are everyday tried to raise the rent. And
10 it's very hard for me to raise my family, with
11 four kids.

12 So I will request to Panel, please
13 consider this and issue the H-tag to those guys
14 who have been driving and serving the public very
15 honestly in Washington, D.C. Thank you very
16 much.

17 MR. BIRBO: My name is Gashaw Birbo.
18 My friend has already said all what should be
19 said. And I'm also one of the drivers who got
20 the license in 2013.

21 And I would like to ask some points.
22 And some of them are, the competition of taxicab

1 in D.C. is getting tough and very challenging due
2 to the very open policy that allowed many
3 companies to operate in the smallest state of the
4 nation.

5 Except taxicab, all these companies
6 are allowed to let the drivers compete and to
7 challenge and to work for their service using
8 their own car. Even though the neighbor passed
9 through any trainings of car, operation,
10 business, postures and the polices.

11 Drivers whose stations in the
12 companies that own H-tag have been complaining
13 and protesting every day about their tough
14 survival in the business because of the fact that
15 other competitors have taken all their customers.

16 If drivers who own H-tag can survive,
17 what can be understood about us? Are we expected
18 to train and work and subsidize their life and
19 families? Why don't you be given at least
20 opportunity to work for our service and compete
21 with others? Why are we enslaved in the capital
22 of freedom nation?

1 Giving an H-tag and face ID doesn't
2 make any difference in terms of flooding the
3 streets with a taxicab because of the following
4 reasons. All newly licensed drivers are going to
5 drive cars that are not occupied by others
6 previously.

7 All most all the cabs we rent are
8 drive are just purchased by associations from
9 auctions and individuals that will never be used
10 as vehicles for hire in the streets of Columbia.

11 If we are given H-tags we are going to
12 clean the street and the environment by giving
13 service with fuel efficient and safe to drive
14 cabs. So that the District street will be free
15 from dangers to operate unsafe cabs we are
16 renting from associations now.

17 The second point is, the availability
18 of cab associations don't have well organized
19 customer friendly dispatch and call system.
20 Because of this, many cabs are seen flooding many
21 streets and hotels and dip into residential and
22 recreational areas.

1 If dispatch system is more organized
2 and improved, and also if DCTC gives us H-tag,
3 we'll provide better customer comfort and safe
4 driver of cars and to give service to customers
5 as they're residents like other competitors.

6 This is the Nation's Capital, which is
7 the home of Congress and Senators who needs
8 respect and a standard taxi service. Better than
9 the other states.

10 Also, big meetings and a conference
11 are held by guests from the whole states and
12 other part of the world. In D.C. who expects
13 American standards safe and a comfortable taxicab
14 service.

15 If H-tag is issued, we can buy
16 comfortable, safe and neat vehicles to give
17 standard taxicab so that we contribute for the
18 positive image of the state.

19 And lastly, drive associations and the
20 companies did a very negligible improvement in
21 the modernization on cab service, buy them
22 service, and also never considered customer needs

1 than their income.

2 It has been DCTC that follows up on
3 customer needs and safety to make --

4 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. I hate to
5 stop you, but three minutes is up. Thank you
6 very much. Panel, thank you.

7 I was informed a few folk whose name
8 is on the list, I'm going to call two of them
9 because they were in the list. Mr. Abayoli
10 Orabisi and Mr. Yohannes Hailemariam. If you're
11 here please come to the front.

12 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: They're
13 probably still outside.

14 MR. LINDSAY: Oh, they're still
15 outside? Okay. All right, we'll hold tight
16 then.

17 All right, we'll move on down the
18 list. Mr. Abebe Aklog --

19 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: They coming in
20 now I think.

21 MR. LINDSAY: Oh, are these the two?
22 We're only two -- okay. If I call your name

1 please come to the front. Just your names only.

2 Mr. Abayoli Orabisi, please come to
3 the front.

4 Mr. Yohannes, H-A-I-L-E-M-A-R-I-A-N.
5 If that's you, please come to the front and have
6 a seat. No? Okay.

7 Then we'll go down the list. Mr.
8 Abebe Aklog. A-B-E-B-E, A-K-L-O-G.

9 Farooq, M-I-A-N. Okay.

10 Mohammad Sharjil Rahman. Mohammad
11 Rahman. R-A-H-M-A-N.

12 Shefer Mengesha. S-H-E-F-E-R, M-E-N-
13 G-E-S-H-A.

14 Kehinde Aderoju. A-D-E-R-O-J-U.

15 Sood Rajesh. R-A-J-E-S-H.

16 Dhaliwal Jagdee. J-A-G-D-E-E.

17 Tiruneh Abraham. T-I-R-U-N-E-H,

18 Abraham.

19 Elias Jimma. E-L-I-A-S, J-I-M-M-A.

20 Gepe -- G-E-P-E-M-E-S-H, D-E-G-A-F-A-

21 W. No?

22 Nesibu Girma. Nesibu Girma.

1 B-R-I-R-U-K, Jimma.

2 Evelyn Ruiz. R-U-I-Z. All right.

3 Woldetsadik Tesfaye. W-O-L-D-E-T-S-A-
4 D-I-K. Tesfaye, T-E-S-F-A-Y-E.

5 Nadew Dehiru. Nadew Dehiru, D-E-H-I-
6 R-U.

7 M'hamed Katir. M'H-A-M-E-D, K-A-T-I-
8 R.

9 Mian Arshad. M-I-A-N, A-S -- A-R-S-H-
10 A-D.

11 Junaid Khan. J-U-N-A-I-D, K-H-A-N.

12 Tariq Fadle. T-A-R-I-Q, F-A-D-L-E.

13 Dereje Belachew. B-E-L-A-C-H-E-W.

14 Teodros Wube. W-U-B-E.

15 Antenne Lashitew. L-A-S-H-I-T-E-W.

16 Biruk Tadesse. T-A-D-E-S-S-E.

17 Abraham Tiruneh. Tiruneh, T-I-R-U-N-
18 E-H.

19 Gulelat, Gulelat -- I'm sorry. G-E-L-
20 E -- G-U-L-E-L-A-T. Last name is B-I-A-M-E-S-H.

21 Mohammed Akram. A-K-R-A-M.

22 Solomon Woldegebriel. W-O-L-D-E-G-E-

1 B-R-I-E-L.

2 Muhammad Tariq. T-A-R-I-Q.

3 Tesema Erkihun. E-R-K-I-H-U-N.

4 A-B-A-Y, T-E-G-E-G-N-E.

5 Simon Gebregzeabher. G-E -- I'm

6 sorry, let me spell your last name. G-E-B-R-E-G-

7 Z-E-A-B-H-E-R. No?

8 R-E-D-I, Delulo. D-E-L-U-L-O.

9 I-Z-Z-E-L-D-I-N, Elamin. E-L-A-M-I-N.

10 Dawit Wulle. W-U-L-L-E.

11 Behailu Worke. W-O-R-K-E. First

12 name, B-E-H-A-I-L-U.

13 Mamadu Shaw. M-A-M-A-D-U, S-H-A-W.

14 MR. SHAW: Yes.

15 MR. LINDSAY: Please have a seat up

16 front. Yes, that's fine. Thank you. Okay.

17 All right, first person please state

18 your name for the record. Remember, each one of

19 you all have three minutes to speak, okay?

20 MR. ORABISI: My name is Abayoli

21 Orabisi. I be driving since 1982. And every

22 year when I going to overseas I always submit my

1 tag. I get my receipt from DMV.

2 And this time I went home in 2012.

3 And I sold my cab and I submitted my tag to DMV.

4 And when I came back I bought another
5 cab. And I went to DMV to get my tag. They
6 said, no, you cannot get it back. And up to this
7 present moment, I don't know the reason why I
8 cannot get it back. So please, I'm renting a cab
9 now for \$250 a week. I'm old, I've been driving
10 for so long.

11 I do it to make the money. \$250 a
12 week, you can be out there for almost ten hours.
13 You don't even make \$100 a day. And I have to
14 pay \$250? And I have three children in college.
15 Please, I need a help.

16 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Sir, can you
17 give me your name one more time, slowly for me.

18 MR. ORABISI: What did you say? My
19 name?

20 MR. LINDSAY: What's your name again?

21 MR. ORABISI: Abayoli Orabisi. I have
22 my receipt here that --

1 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. I'm just trying
2 to make sure I have you on my list, that's all.

3 MR. ORABISI: Yes.

4 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. Spell your name
5 for me, sir.

6 MR. ORABISI: A-B-A-Y-O-L-I, that's my
7 first name.

8 MR. LINDSAY: Okay.

9 MR. ORABISI: My initial is, A. The
10 last name is Orabisi, O-R-A-B-I-S-I.

11 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Okay, I'd
12 like to make an announcement. Again, I can't
13 require you to leave, by law, however, after you
14 speak, we have so many folk waiting to speak, as
15 you guys heard on this list, as I go through
16 them.

17 I think many of these folk are
18 outside. Staff right now are working, going out
19 asking folks if any of their names is on the
20 list. That's why you see the young lady
21 continually bringing me names so that we can get
22 everybody. And we want everyone to be heard.

1 However, we would like these seats to
2 be available for some of those folk. And I can't
3 require you to leave, but if you've spoken or
4 your group has been represented already, you
5 know, just be considerate and exit so that
6 someone outside, who's on this list wanted to
7 speak, would have the opportunity. Okay? Thank
8 you.

9 Next speaker please?

10 MR. AKLOG: All right. My name is
11 Abebe Aklog. A-B-E-B-E, A-K-L-O-G.

12 I am a member of the leadership team
13 for the 2009 UDC Group. We represent people who
14 hold a license to drive a cab today, because they
15 began the process of getting a face ID in the
16 year 2009 or earlier.

17 None of our members, however, were
18 ever given an H-tag. In 2009 and earlier, the
19 licensing process had two parts.

20 Upon passing both parts, the new cab
21 driver was automatically eligible to get an H-
22 tag. Our members took and passed the qualifying

1 exam at UDC in or before the year 2009. But we
2 were not allowed to take the second part until
3 November 2013. And by then H-tags were no longer
4 available.

5 Making matters worse, between 2009 and
6 2013, DCTC refused to tell us what it was doing
7 with our applications. Our requests, somehow
8 members rent a cab full-time, others part-time.
9 And others cannot afford to rent a cab.

10 Our members have a simple request.
11 That DCTC recognize that how it has timely
12 processed our applications for a face ID back in
13 2009, we would have qualified for an H-tag before
14 the agency stopped issuing them in the year 2010.

15 In closing, our members choose to
16 become cab drivers in D.C. specifically because
17 D.C. gave H-tags to cab drivers. If however
18 these options had been suspended or revoked, we
19 were not told of that change prior to starting
20 the licensing process.

21 Rather, DCTC let us start the process
22 under what everyone believed it still included

1 the H-tag option. We do not know why DCTC
2 refused to process our applications in 2009. But
3 we do know that this inaction has stripped us of
4 the economy opportunities the agency extended to
5 the cab drivers who were timely processed.

6 This is unfair to us. So we ask you
7 to solve this problem by doing what the agency
8 was unable or unwilling to do six years ago.
9 Give our members an H-tag right away. Thank you.

10 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Could you
11 spell your name for me one more time. I just
12 want to make sure I didn't -- give me your name
13 again?

14 MR. AKLOG: A-B-E-B-E.

15 MR. LINDSAY: Oh, Abebe. Okay. Okay.
16 Thank you. Next speaker please. Yes, next
17 speaker please.

18 MR. ADEROJU: My name is Kehinde
19 Aderoju. K-E-H-I-N-D-E. My last name is, A-D-E-
20 R-O-J-U.

21 MR. LINDSAY: Please start, sir.

22 MR. ADEROJU: Well I just wanted to

1 thank DCTC.

2 MR. LINDSAY: You have to speak up,
3 sir.

4 MR. ADEROJU: I use this opportunity
5 to thank DCTC for giving us this opportunity, our
6 feelings. Well I haven't really anything to say,
7 because most of my colleagues have similarly what
8 was said.

9 What they elude now to purchase. The
10 purpose, we need --

11 MR. LINDSAY: A couple things. I
12 can't hear you and I'm sure the rest of the
13 group. And you're also being recorded, so do you
14 mind speaking up a little clearly, we can't
15 really --

16 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Move the mic a
17 little bit closer.

18 MR. LINDSAY: Slower. Excuse me, I
19 apologize. Go ahead.

20 MR. ADEROJU: Okay. My name is
21 Kehinde Aderoju.

22 MR. LINDSAY: Okay.

1 MR. ADEROJU: My last name is Aderoju.

2 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Pull the mic
3 closer to you.

4 MR. ADEROJU: Okay.

5 MR. LINDSAY: There you go.

6 MR. ADEROJU: Okay. I'm using this
7 opportunity to thank DCTC for giving us
8 opportunity to speak.

9 Most of our colleagues are saying what
10 I want to say, but the reason, we only need -- I
11 need only H-tags. That is it.

12 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. Thank you. Thank
13 you. Next speaker please.

14 MS. RUIZ: Good morning to the
15 Commission and to all the attendees. My name is
16 Evelyn Ruiz.

17 I am the manager of the Classic Cab
18 Association. I am requesting to this Panel to
19 reactivate my two H-tags. H-98755 with PBIN
20 D471.

21 In June of 2013 my driver, Solomon
22 Okoroh, was robbed and shoot to death. The OAG

1 kept my taxicab for over a year, as in evidence.

2 I continued paying the insurance from
3 June 2013 until the tag expired in February 2014.
4 In July 2014 I tried to put a replacement vehicle
5 for it, but it was denied.

6 Second license plate is H-99847 with
7 PBIN D4830. In 2013 my driver got involved in a
8 terrible accident.

9 The case was filed and heard in court
10 for over a year. I continued paying for the
11 insurance from June 2013, until the tag expired
12 in February 2014. I tried to put a replacement
13 vehicle in July 2014, but also denied.

14 I had been requesting for both license
15 plates to be reactivated with Mr. Linton and Mr.
16 Scott. Then Mr. Rogers and Mr. Scott. But I was
17 only given hope and then nothing.

18 In my opinion on the issuance of H-
19 tags. H-tags should be reactivated if they had
20 PBIN, if insurance had been paid until the tags
21 expired, if the H-tags and DCTC registration are
22 still in the owner's possession.

1 In my opinion, new H-tags should be
2 issued to the companies that are willing to add
3 new WAV to their fleet without mandating to
4 register with Yellow or Transco for a dispatch
5 service.

6 No, I am not in favor to open the
7 issuance of H-tags for everybody. We have to
8 control and prioritize. We need a written
9 guidelines, not just by word of mouth.

10 Thank you for giving me this
11 opportunity to speak. Have a wonderful day.

12 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Please
13 pronounce your name, sir. Thank you much.

14 MR. SHAW: Good morning. My name is
15 Mamadu Shaw.

16 MR. LINDSAY: Spell that for me,
17 please.

18 MR. SHAW: M-A-M-A-D-U, Mamadu. Shaw,
19 S-H-A-W. Shaw.

20 I am a cab driver since the beginning
21 of this year. So I am a family of seven and I am
22 the only that's working.

1 So I'm appealing for the Commission to
2 give me a tag so that I can able to take care of
3 my family. I'm also happy about the competition
4 that you allow now in D.C. in D.C. Taxicab.

5 Now we are doing a good job and the
6 customer service is very good now. The customers
7 have a choice of payment. Now we are doing that
8 correctly.

9 But the only thing that we are having
10 now, about the Uber. Uber doesn't have the
11 requirement that we, the D.C. cab driver, have.

12 So we can't be afraid of competing
13 with Uber. But if they have the same requirement
14 that we have, it will be a fair competition.

15 We are appealing to the Commission to
16 help us, give us tag. So that we can compete
17 with the Uber.

18 And the customers have this now. We
19 are doing very good about the resident and the
20 authorities that coming, because we are able to
21 speak English well to them and talking to them
22 and showing them certain places that they need

1 to.

2 But Uber is giving us a hard time
3 because, first of all, they are charging less
4 than the amount that we, by the Taxicab Industry.
5 And we are appealing, please help us to give us
6 tag.

7 We are family members. Most cab
8 drivers have more than two or three family
9 members. And most of us, we are the only one
10 that are working.

11 We are appealing to you, please help
12 us get a tag numbers. Thank you very much. May
13 God bless you all.

14 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Thank you
15 very much.

16 Okay, so Adel Becher. A-D-E-L, B-E-C-
17 H-E-R. Please.

18 Slim Baldi. Slim Baldi, please have
19 a seat. Okay.

20 Next on the list is Minale Yerdaw. M-
21 I-N-A-L-E, Y-E-R-D-A-W.

22 Alemu Filatie. A-L-E-M-U, F-I-L-A-T-

1 I-E.

2 Bevawork Gebreyohanise. Last name, G-
3 E-B-R-E-Y-O-H-A-N-I-S-E, Gebreyohanise. Sorry, I
4 just chopped up your name.

5 Tessaye Wako. T-E-S-S-A-Y-E, W-A-K-O.

6 Beseraw Gibrimichael. G-I-B-R-I-M-I-
7 C-H-A-E-L.

8 Leul Ghidey. G-H-I-D-E-Y.

9 Taera Jirata. T-A-E-R-A, J-I-R-A-T-A.

10 Daniel Weldemeskel. Daniel

11 Weldemeskel. W-E-L-D-E-M-E-S-K-E-L.

12 Brook Yoseph. Brook Yoseph. Brook
13 Yoseph.

14 Tesena Erkihus. T-E-S-E-N-A, E-R-K-I-
15 H-U-S.

16 Bekalu Gizaw. Last name, G-I-Z-A-W.

17 A-D-D-E-L-K-R-I-M, A-K-L-I. Last
18 name, A-K-L-I.

19 First name, Elmostapha Ghalim. E-L-M-
20 O-S-T-A-P-H-A, G-H-A-L-I-M.

21 Nidussie, G-O-B-E-N-A.

22 Keith Sampler. Keith Sampler.

1 Yahya Jama. Y-A-H-Y-A, J-A-M-A.

2 First name is, C-H-O-U-A-I-B. Last
3 name is, B-A-H-O-U-J-A-B-O-U-R.

4 Azawan Amazigh. A-Z-A-W-A-M, A-M-A-Z-
5 I-G-H.

6 Raj Khan. R-A-J, K-H-A-N.

7 Shiraz Kahn. S-H-I-R-A-Z, K-H-A-N.

8 Thank you.

9 Benaissa Benmessaoud. Last name, B-E-
10 N-M-E-S-S-A-O-U-D.

11 Muhammad Zaheer. Z-A-H-E-E-R.

12 Fekadu Hailu. F-E-K-A-D-U, H-A-I-L-U.

13 Goitom Issac. G-O-I-T-O-M, I-S-S-A-C.

14 Nessibu Bezabeh. Last name, B-E-Z-A-
15 B-E-H.

16 Olasoji Olaniyi. Last name, O-L-A-N-
17 I-Y-I.

18 Alemahun Bersomaa. B-E-R-S-O-M-A-A.

19 Urrahman Halim. H-A-L-I-M.

20 Fekadu Yofef. Last name, Y-O-F-E-F.

21 Ronald Bethea. Ronald Bethea.

22 Okay, that's our five. All right,

1 please, sir, spell your first name. You may
2 begin, sir.

3 MR. BECHER: Okay. My name Adel
4 Becher. A-D-E-L, Becher, B-E-C-H-E-R.

5 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. Please begin.

6 MR. BECHER: Okay. Good afternoon,
7 Taxicab Commission. I want to thank the Panel
8 for giving us the chance to speak about the H-
9 tag.

10 I would like to get an H-tag for an
11 important reason. Number one, fuel efficiency
12 and low emission vehicle that support the
13 environment.

14 Number two, both better clientele and
15 customer satisfaction. Number three, I support
16 D.C. and am willing to do the best I can to build
17 a better D.C. for raise -- for a family, friends,
18 visit and outfitter.

19 So again, thank you so much. I
20 appreciate this big opportunity to talk, speak
21 about the H-tag. And my best regard.

22 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you so much.

1 MR. BECHER: Thank you so much.

2 MR. LINDSAY: Next speaker please.

3 MR. BALDI: My name is Baldi, Slim.

4 MR. LINDSAY: Okay.

5 MR. BALDI: Last name Baldi, B-A-L-D-
6 I. First name Slim, S-L-I-M. Thank you for this
7 opportunity.

8 I've been living in D.C. for almost 25
9 years. I live in D.C. I've been working as a
10 cab driver for almost 15 years in the
11 Metropolitan area.

12 In the last six years I've been
13 driving in D.C. I work for a company, because
14 the reason I came, for the H-tag. I lost at
15 least 30 to 35 percent of my income due to Uber.
16 And I'm working for a company and I'm paying like
17 \$315 a week, which is like \$1,260.

18 And I cannot afford to do this because
19 I'm in a point to losing my house. Because I
20 lost, like I said, I lost like 30 to 40 percent
21 to Uber. I cannot afford my mortgage anymore.
22 I'm like a couple of months away from losing my

1 mortgage.

2 And the only reason I'm here, I was
3 hoping to get like a H-tag that could help me
4 with my mortgage. Because I could save at least,
5 at least \$600 on the payment, like monthly. And
6 I could save at least, at least another \$400 on
7 gas if I buy a hybrid car.

8 And I've been trying to do that. To
9 buy a hybrid car. But I cannot -- I have to have
10 a H-tag.

11 And I have a family of four. And I
12 really cannot afford to lose my house. If you
13 could please help me with the H-tag. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: What city were
15 you driving in?

16 MR. BALDI: I live in Northeast, D.C.

17 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: What city were
18 you driving in before you started driving in
19 D.C.?

20 MR. BALDI: I worked in Red Top and
21 Barwood.

22 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay.

1 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much,
2 sir. Next speaker please. Please say your name.

3 MR. YOSEPH: My name is Brook Yoseph.
4 B-R-O-O-K, Y-O-S-E-P-H. Good afternoon. Thank
5 you for this dignified opportunity for us to
6 voice our opinion.

7 As my colleague has pointed out, most
8 of the common and well heard reasons, but are
9 highlighted by beginning with this.

10 First and foremost, the adverse
11 environment, which unduly and significantly harms
12 current D.C. taxi drivers that are operating
13 without the H-tag financially per year can be
14 equated, minimum of \$24,960 as an operating cost.
15 I'll summarize the adverse environment in the
16 end.

17 In continuing, the second part to my
18 opinion is, the advantage of issuing individual
19 H-tags for the current D.C. licensed taxi
20 operators are as follows. And I'll skip the ones
21 already stated.

22 That is to provide a better

1 opportunity for drivers to make sustainable
2 income and get off of District issued welfare.
3 It does not make sense to withhold H-tag and turn
4 around and give food stamps and affordable
5 housing when able members can do that for
6 themselves.

7 Next, is to reduce the current
8 licensed drivers' dependency on social welfare's.

9 And the last one is, increase the
10 amount of operating revenue for the DCTC. The
11 more drivers that are able to have their own H-
12 tag, the more operating revenues that the D.C.
13 Taxicab Commission can bring in to sustain its
14 daily and annual operation.

15 This is my personal opinion and a
16 possible criteria for issuing the H-tag, as there
17 are many, is as follows. Provide a vehicle
18 within a reasonable time period that meets the
19 DCTC guidelines.

20 Obtain the required operating
21 insurance. Maintain current taxicab operating
22 license and install the required equipment, as

1 outlined within the guidelines.

2 Pay all operating costs associated
3 with individual ownership and have a transparent
4 and up to date electronic monitoring so that
5 everybody has a fair chance at making a living.

6 In conclusion, the D.C. Taxicab H-tag
7 should be issued to those that are legally
8 license in DCTC to operate within the District.

9 The current moratorium on H-tag is
10 baseless. Since the implementation the District
11 had absorbed over 20,000 private vehicles for
12 hire under various companies that do not meet the
13 standards set by the DCTC.

14 Therefore, the old outdated taxi per
15 capita formula is inadequate in determining the
16 number of H-tags needed to meet the drivers
17 demand. Instead, the demand of the taxi rights
18 should be determined by the individual daily
19 activities in the District as well as hundreds of
20 events taking place. Thank you very much.

21 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Thank you,
22 sir. Please give me your name, please.

1 MR. OLANIYI: My name is Olaniyi
2 Olasoji.

3 MR. LINDSAY: Spell it.

4 MR. OLANIYI: O-L-A-N-I-Y-I. My first
5 name is Olasoji, O-L-A-S-O-J-I. Thank you so,
6 Panel, for giving us this opportunity to sit
7 before you and tell you our minds.

8 You see, America was built on freedom.
9 We want freedom. And we need a fair and
10 reasonable competition.

11 We allow Uber to buy their own cars,
12 which is very rummy. Not everybody likes new
13 things. In which we know there are many
14 customers, not because of the fare, but because
15 of the convenience.

16 They have a nice car in 2011, 2014,
17 2018. Something like that. Because it's more
18 convenient and it's roomy. It's nice. It's
19 cool. So we can't continue to be under pressure
20 or slavery by renting junk cars. The cars of
21 2008 that went auction, freeze it up, I give it
22 to you.

1 Why, because we have no option. We
2 have to feed our family. Is what we have
3 available and how we're going to get. And I want
4 to say, it will be better paid down like security
5 deposit. Apart from your rent.

6 Yes. You got to put down security
7 deposit and you can pay your rent. Where you're
8 living, they give you back your money. Which
9 means we got no option. We got to go there and
10 walk.

11 I don't want food stamps because I
12 want to work. You know, I don't want my name to
13 be on food stamps or on it.

14 So we are hoping. That is why we are
15 very so much happy for giving this opportunity.
16 For people to come before you and say their
17 minds. So thank you so much, and God bless.

18 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: We're going to
19 take a ten minute break.

20 (Off-microphone comments)

21 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Oh, I'm sorry.
22 I'm sorry. Excuse me, he was on the corner, I

1 didn't recognize him.

2 MR. LINDSAY: Yes, please go ahead,
3 sir.

4 MR. BETHEA: My name is Ronald Bethea.
5 I'm here in two capacities today. One, as a
6 veteran African-American cab driver in the
7 District of Columbia for 44 years who did carry
8 his people to Southeast Washington and Northeast
9 Washington, D.C. at night.

10 I retired from driving a cab on
11 October 31st, 2014 behind this H-tag issue. I
12 was no longer able to maintain my residents in
13 the District because of problems with my vehicle.
14 Which were beyond my control.

15 I have a 3 year old grandson now who
16 was -- my daughter was expecting at that time.
17 And I had an expired inspection sticker, but my
18 tags were good on my cab.

19 So I happened to have to jump in my
20 vehicle and take my daughter to Holy Cross in
21 Montgomery County. I was stopped.

22 The police, the Montgomery County,

1 took my tags off of my car, wrote me eight
2 tickets. I went to court in Montgomery County
3 and was exonerated from all charges. I never got
4 my tags back from Montgomery County Police
5 Department.

6 Now it was forced, as these gentlemen
7 have eloquently stated, to have to rent a cab
8 from Mr. Jerry Shaffer for almost two and a half
9 years after being a driving for 44 years owning
10 his own vehicle. And a District resident at that
11 time.

12 The sad part about this thing was I
13 paid the insurance until, on my tags, until my
14 face ran out. And the light came out on my head.

15 Why should I ruin a hack license with
16 all of the impediments in the marketplace such as
17 Uber, Lyft and all these other people working for
18 free, but I can't even get a H-tag after 44 years
19 of service in this community.

20 And I rest my case. It makes no sense
21 for veteran drivers who were licensed and had
22 vehicles before 2006, not even be able to get a

1 tag to put their car back out on the street.

2 And as I said, I have my story, but
3 each one of you have your own story. It makes no
4 sense for this Commission to have frozen these
5 tags these years and now we are faced with a 12
6 to every -- a cab driver on the street to every
7 1,000 people. We got too many cabs.

8 But we're still under this pressure
9 where people are losing their homes and they have
10 to come here today because of these H-tags. So
11 thank you very much for giving me a little more
12 time.

13 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir, I
14 appreciate it. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Mr. Bethea. I
16 apologize that I was getting ready to do a ten
17 minute before you talked. You was on the corner
18 and I didn't recognize that it was your turn. So
19 I apologize. And thank you for your statement.

20 MR. BETHEA: Yes, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Now we'll take
22 a ten minute break and we'll start back where we

1 left off from. So, please, anyone that have
2 testimony, come back in ten minutes.

3 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
4 went off the record at 12:48 p.m. and resumed at
5 1:13 p.m.)

6 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: First, I'd like
7 to thank you all for being patient and staying
8 for the rest of the hearing. Thank you very
9 much. The meeting will now be back in session.

10 MR. LINDSAY: Let me make a statement.
11 We will have time, I believe, based upon the
12 remaining witnesses, to take testimony from folk
13 who did not register.

14 So I think there will be an
15 opportunity to be heard, okay. Because a couple
16 folk came up and asked me, and I do think there
17 will be time for that, okay.

18 All right, so let's get back to the
19 list. Mr. O-M-I-K-U-N-L-E, O-L-U-W-A-F.

20 G-E-T-A-H-U-M, A-M-E-D-E.

21 T-E-Z-E-R-A, A-B-B-E. Tezera Abbe.

22 Khaleel Ahmad. Khaleel Ahmad.

1 Mohammad Morman of Silver Cab.

2 Mohammad Morman.

3 Belaye Tuffer. B-E-L-A-Y-E, T-U-F-F-
4 E-R.

5 Minilik Teseri. T-E-R -- T-E-S --
6 Teseri, T-E-S-E-R-I.

7 Khan Masso. K-H-A-N, M-A-S-S-O.

8 Bhiyen Mohammadhuda.

9 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: I think he's
10 there.

11 MR. LINDSAY: All right, thank you.

12 Merid Kahsay. M---E-R-I-D, K-A-H-S-A-Y.

13 Tesfaye Khaddis. K-H-A-D-D-I-S.

14 Falese Akintoye. Falese Akintoye.

15 Kamran Ibrahim. K-A-M-R-A-N, Ibrahim.

16 Yohannes Yilma. Yohannes Yilma.

17 Ayele Sewasew. S-E-W-A-S-E-W.

18 Abdulmelik Shifa. Okay.

19 So those are the reaming names on my
20 list. After this Panel, those who wish to
21 testify who did not submit testimony, we'll let
22 you come up. But we're going to need you to sign

1 in. If you don't mind. If you'd like to
2 testify.

3 (Off-microphone comments)

4 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. You would like to
5 testify? You already, okay. Mr. Youssef Baldi,
6 because you're already on the list.

7 MR. BALDI: Thank you.

8 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Okay. So
9 just these four. Excuse me, excuse me. I
10 apologize. Okay, we'll begin.

11 Okay, ready, sir? You can begin, sir.
12 Go ahead.

13 MR. MORMAN: Good afternoon. My name
14 is Mohammed Morman from Silver Cab Company. I
15 have some highlights regarding the issuing a H-
16 tag.

17 As a business man, as a business man
18 I should ask for -- can I start?

19 MR. LINDSAY: You can go ahead. I'm
20 sorry.

21 MR. MORMAN: Good afternoon. My name
22 is Mohammad Morman. I've from Silver Cab

1 Company.

2 As a business man I should ask for
3 more tag, for H-tags. But regarding my cab
4 driver complaining every single day, which they
5 are losing 30, 35 percent of their income and
6 that's going to damage them more than to not
7 issue tag.

8 If we are going to issue more tags,
9 it's going to be more people and they will lose
10 more income. And their income from 35 to 40
11 percent where they will lose 50 to 55 percent
12 more income.

13 So I would like to concern about that
14 one. And I'm sure the cab driver will not happy
15 with the more tags.

16 Number two, it is not good for the
17 public. It's going to be a very more -- it's
18 going to more congestion on the city. It's going
19 to be more traffic, it's going to be more
20 congestion on the traffic regarding the issuing
21 more tags.

22 Number three, I'm sure the government

1 will not like it, is instead of the police to go
2 for the crime, drug trafficking. Those things.

3 And they will be stuck with the
4 accident of those tags of congestion and blocking
5 every block. So I will not be happy to issue
6 more tag unless for the people they do drive or
7 they did drive the last 15 to 20 years, yes.

8 And they had the tag before 2006.
9 March of 2006. Yes, I would like to issue a tag
10 for those people. Not for everybody. Because we
11 don't need it.

12 We do have 7,500 for 7,000 cab
13 drivers. And there are more than 12 to 13,000
14 Uber. And if we are going to issue another 2,000
15 more tag, D.C. doesn't need, on the top of
16 everything's, we do need a good clear study and
17 survey. Do we need or no.

18 After the study then the Panel can
19 decide, do we need it or not. Otherwise it's
20 going to be a big, big problem for the public,
21 for the police, for everybody.

22 And it's going to be a very big

1 congestion inside the city. And we see it every
2 day. And thank you very much.

3 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Yes, please
4 pronounce your name, sir.

5 MR. MOHAMMEDHUDA: Good afternoon.
6 Everyone, my name is Bhiyen Mohammedhuda and I am
7 a fellow D.C. taxi driver. And previously driven
8 in a residential Diamond Cab about a decade.

9 And like many of taxi driver, I would
10 like to present my opinion about this tag. When
11 I started this job I had to rent a yellow cab. I
12 have been driving it for a while in D.C.

13 The reason I have been renting this
14 cab is because I have no H-tag from DCTC. With
15 renting this cab I am using my situation is not
16 in a very good condition -- is good sort.

17 The cab I am currently driving is a
18 Ford Crown Victoria. So it is not energy
19 efficient. And it is old, consumes too much gas
20 and has some broken parts here and there.

21 Adding to this, I am currently in a
22 financial crisis because business is quite slow.

1 With the way, it is now another part of my income
2 goes to paying for my rent, cab and gas when my
3 money should be going to support my family. With
4 all my money getting dried out from renting and
5 gas.

6 I am starting to have a very narrow
7 income. Therefore, I'm requesting that H-tag
8 should be issued to me because if they were, I
9 would be able to drive my energy efficient hybrid
10 Toyota Prius on the road. This will not only be
11 fortunate for me, but for my whole family.

12 If H-tag will not be issued, I am
13 afraid I have to take my wife and two kids and
14 head back to Bangladesh. All because my earning
15 would go to rent and gas. And not for my family.

16 Anyway, thank you very much listening
17 me, to listening me and my speech about my
18 current hardship. And allowing me to get to
19 speak here today. So thank you very much and God
20 bless you.

21 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Next speaker
22 please.

1 MR. FELESE: My name's Akintoye, A-K-
2 I-N-T-O-Y-E, Michael, Felese, F-E-L-E-S-E. I
3 want to express my opposition for allowing us to
4 say our opinion concerning our situation.

5 I am a taxi, D.C. taxi driver. And I
6 believe all of the driver are the image of DCTC.

7 In the present situation where there
8 is a lot of competition, we are the immediate
9 transportation system or the deregulated in D.C.
10 Where we have so many branches that is providing
11 services.

12 It would be a pleasure if we are in a
13 situation to compete with other service
14 providers.

15 My argument goes to the -- I mean
16 condition, present condition of the H-tag. Which
17 of course there are so many are forced that was
18 like driving. Having the license but not having
19 opportunity to have -- not given opportunity to
20 have a tag.

21 It is going to be a -- like a player.
22 If DCTC can consider drivers and issue tags for

1 those who are -- I mean for those who are
2 driving. So that they could be able to get their
3 own convenient car to provide services for their
4 customers. I mean to like -- for convenience for
5 the customer and for the drivers.

6 I have two examples. I have a friend
7 that was renting a car. And he woke up in the
8 morning preparing to go to work. He was called
9 by his company. Can you please come to the
10 office today? Today is -- I mean your admission
11 is due for today.

12 He went there and unfortunately it was
13 like picking the -- the cab was taken from me.
14 And for two weeks it was at home. The cab
15 wouldn't even go through the emissions process.

16 And if that particular person have a
17 tag on his own and is able to get a --

18 MR. LINDSAY: I have to stop you right
19 there. You have a three minute limit. I've
20 actually let you go over about 30 seconds. All
21 right, thank you.

22 But if you have a written testimony

1 you would like for us to get those, that
2 information, those stories, the record, when I
3 say the record, you guys can submit any
4 documentation you'd like. More testimony, for
5 this hearing. It will close on July 30th.

6 Now we are having a second hearing --
7 I'm sorry, excuse me. The record will close for
8 this hearing on July 31st.

9 However, we're having a second
10 hearing, similar in nature, on July 30th.

11 Thursday July 30th, okay. Thank you.

12 Yes, sir? Mr. Baldi.

13 MR. BALDI: Yes. My name is Youssef
14 Baldi and thanks for having us today. To listen
15 about this H-tag request.

16 I'm here actually to -- there's a lot
17 of things that I would like to talk about, but I
18 know I don't have enough time.

19 But anyway, I had the tag since 2004,
20 I returned it around 2010. But I didn't know
21 that you wouldn't be able to get your tags back.
22 So I'm waiting.

1 I mean for -- I went to the office and
2 they said, we can no longer give tags back, you
3 just have to wait until, you know, something
4 happens. So, you know.

5 And but I'm here also for other
6 important things. I think it's nice to have your
7 own car for many reasons.

8 I mean I've been also renting for like
9 eight years, so I supported the cab association.
10 They are very good with, you know, charging
11 reasonable fees, you know, repair, all that.

12 But, you know, there is a line of
13 course. I mean there's a -- but somehow, someday
14 you're going to own a cab. There's nothing wrong
15 with that.

16 Besides that, I think having your own
17 car it builds better customer service. You know,
18 nice clean car. You know, a friendly low
19 emissions, you know, fuel efficient. That builds
20 more customer that way. It helps better, in my
21 opinion.

22 And there are many other services who

1 have joined now in the last couple years, so it
2 has affected our income. Many drivers are there
3 like me, I lost about 30 percent. You know, I
4 work ten hours. It's not the same way three or
5 four years ago.

6 So I mean there's a lot of conflict.
7 But I mean I hope our service will get better.
8 You know, maybe proving apps or something.

9 And the old drivers, you know, who
10 have been there a long time, you know, they
11 deserve to get their own cars, their own H-tags.

12 And that's it. Thank you very much
13 for listening.

14 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Mr. Baldi.
15 Yes, sir.

16 MR. KULMIE: Good afternoon. Thank
17 you for hearing. I think you, Mr. Tapscott, if I
18 pronouncing your name. Mr. Lerner and Ms.
19 Muhammad and Mr. Lindsay. If I pronounced your
20 name, I'm sorry.

21 I'm here --

22 MR. LINDSAY: Can you give me your

1 name please?

2 MR. KULMIE: My name is Abdiricak
3 Kulmie. My last name is, K-U-L-M-I-E. My first
4 name is Abdiricak, A-B-D-I-R-I-C-A-K.

5 I am here to get H-tag. I am a new
6 driver. You showed me how to fish, but I don't
7 have the bucket.

8 And I'm here, I need your help. I've
9 been here 24 years in Washington and Virginia.

10 I work Office Depot for 15 years. And
11 I'm able, I cannot work. I cannot stand.

12 Now I can, my car is hand controlled.
13 I have gas and brake on the hand. I like to work
14 five hours a day, maybe I cannot work.

15 Because I pay my company for \$250 a
16 week. That's almost \$2,000 for my applying.
17 Plus gas and everything.

18 I really, really need help, if you can
19 help me. Please help me with H-tag or give me
20 this opportunity to work. Thank you.

21 MR. LERNER: I will get you a bucket
22 if you want one.

1 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Thank you guys
2 for your testimony.

3 MR. LINDSAY: I believe that's those
4 with the -- that's it for the witnesses who
5 either called in or sent an email that were
6 registered.

7 So I think now we'll take the
8 witnesses who didn't register. The first name on
9 that list is Mr. Omikunle Oluwaf. Saeed Khan.
10 Massoud Medghalchi.

11 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Medghalchi.

12 MR. LINDSAY: Medghalchi.

13 Haimanot Bizuayeu. B-I-Z-U-A-Y-E-U.

14 And Leul Ghidey. I think Mr. Ghidey
15 actually registered. Nonetheless. Yes, he was
16 number 111. Yes, okay.

17 So for the record, can you please
18 spell your name.

19 MR. OMIKUNLE: Yes, man. My first
20 name is Oluwaf Omikunle.

21 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. Could you spell
22 it please?

1 MR. OMIKUNLE: And I register and my
2 number is 136.

3 MR. LINDSAY: Oh, you did register?

4 MR. OMIKUNLE: Yes, I registered.

5 MR. LINDSAY: Oh, you're mister --

6 MR. OMIKUNLE: 136.

7 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. Okay, 130. Thank
8 you.

9 MR. OMIKUNLE: 136.

10 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. You can begins,
11 sir.

12 MR. OMIKUNLE: Thank you, sir for this
13 opportunity to give it to us.

14 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Pull the mic a
15 little closer.

16 MR. OMIKUNLE: To be present here.
17 And I be driving, I mean I've been driving for --
18 for driving cab. And we express a lot of change
19 of driving outside there because we drive with
20 disgrace sometime, the driver takes care. But
21 thank God everything is okay.

22 I've been renting a car, sometime a

1 month, we no get a cab back. Maybe the car, the
2 last time it experienced in a cab was have a
3 problem. Of transmission.

4 And for six weeks I can't get a cab
5 back. I run around today the company. When I
6 get there they say, oh, there's no cab available.

7 And I had good credits to get a car.
8 I have a good credit. I can go to the dealer and
9 get a new car. It's not that I would get another
10 car outside there driving, damaged body.

11 Some time we get a car, we start
12 eating the money, in the afternoon it's back up.
13 Like me I have a mortgage I pay. We are six in
14 the family. I'm the only one that's working.

15 I'm about to lose my house because I
16 can't pay the mortgage no more. I need to run
17 around to my friends to support me.

18 But right now, for to get a rent of,
19 with the company, we pay deficits before you can
20 get a car. Sometimes you pay like \$250. I had
21 \$255 every week.

22 And outside of there is nowhere we can

1 get it. Uber, they are good -- I have a friend
2 that was doing Uber. 2015, a lot of money.

3 Compliance for a driver, compliancy
4 for a customer. And good service.

5 And I had spent some time, because
6 sometime I working nights, people would drink and
7 for me, inside the car. And they cannot do for
8 Uber. I just bang your car, I go.

9 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir.
10 Remember, those who have not registered get two
11 minutes to speak. Okay? Thank you.

12 MR. OMIKUNLE: Thank you.

13 MR. LINDSAY: Mr. Saeed Khan.

14 MR. KHAN: My name is Saeed A. Khan.
15 And good afternoon, Commissioners.

16 I have been with you since last 26, 27
17 years. And these are the books which we had at
18 that time. These were the papers which we read
19 at that time. And we were having very good
20 relation with the Taxicab Commission and the
21 customers. Not a single complaint against me in
22 this quarter century.

1 And all this record shows, basically
2 I'm a professional accountant but I really tries
3 to work as a cab driver. And a self-employed and
4 independent job holder.

5 After having so many years, DCTC tags
6 and renewed the tags year after years, for year
7 after years.

8 For some reason I surrendered my tags
9 February 28th, 2010 to have a new vehicle and
10 change the vehicle. But unfortunately I applied
11 for the new tags and I was refused.

12 Then I have to co-sign with Ese Cab
13 Company. Title is mine, signed by them as well.
14 Car is mine, registration is mine, insurance is
15 mine and Ese Cab Company is asking me \$100 a
16 month just for the cost co-signature.

17 I don't know, after so many workings,
18 why we have to give them the money. What for?
19 This is not justice with the senior cab drivers
20 who spent a quarter century in taxicab industry
21 by providing best cab services.

22 Until now I have not a single

1 complaint in DCTC regarding my taxicab
2 operations. I request humbly to issue my tags
3 back and oblige, give a pride back to cab driver.
4 Thank you very much, Commissioner.

5 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir. Mister

6 --

7 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Medghalchi.

8 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. Can you spell
9 your name slowly please.

10 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Mr. Lindsay, Mr.
11 Tapscott and Commissioners. Thank you for
12 opportunity to testify today. I'm going to beat
13 a dead horse again.

14 The owner operators of this business
15 comprise of 70 percent, if not more, of the
16 entire industry. Our interest has never been
17 taken into account.

18 There has been unscrupulous cab
19 chairman that sold licenses before that added
20 unneeded cabs to this system. There were people
21 in city council that wanted to create jobs so
22 they dumped more people on the industry.

1 There were nefarious different
2 examples of different actions taken by D.C.
3 Taxicab Commission when they wanted to basically
4 bring a revenue that added more tags.

5 I'm not against people that lost their
6 tags unfairly. I stated this in front of Mr.
7 Linton.

8 I whole heartedly agree with everyone
9 that for some unfortunate reason, a bad accident
10 or something, lost their tag and they came to a
11 surprise when they came to get their tags. They
12 basically were surprised that they could not
13 reinstate their tags.

14 However, the interest of the 70
15 percent or more, of the Industry that have lost
16 their income, their downtime is going to what? I
17 have 1:56 minutes of downtime that is recorded on
18 the PSB. So I cannot be lying about it.

19 The fact is there are too many people
20 in this Industry. 1.6 to 2 cabs per 1,000 people
21 is the standard used in the entire industrialized
22 world. Including this country.

1 We have the highest numbers in this
2 country recorded our 3.3 per 1,000 people. D.C.
3 has 12 per 1,000 people.

4 There are too many cabs. On top of
5 that, over 13,000 cars has been added by the
6 shared car driving. This cannot be --

7 MR. LINDSAY: I hate to cut you off.

8 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Thank you.

9 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Again, if
10 you have written testimony.

11 MR. MEDGHALCHI: We will be, sir.

12 MR. LINDSAY: Please. The record is
13 open --

14 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Absolutely.

15 MR. LINDSAY: -- until the 20th --

16 MR. MEDGHALCHI: 30th.

17 MR. LINDSAY: 30th.

18 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Pass the mic
19 down.

20 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Please state
21 your name and spell it for us please.

22 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Good afternoon. My

1 name is Haimanot Bizuayehu. I'll spell it for
2 you. First name, H-A-I-M-A-N-O-T. Last name, B-
3 I-Z-U-A-Y-E-H-U.

4 And I'm a cab driver in Washington,
5 D.C. for the last 20 years. The reason why, I
6 have been testifying before this Commission many
7 times before. But the reason why I'm here today
8 is regarding the issuance of the H-tag.

9 I support the D.C. Taxicab open
10 system. But at the same time that open system
11 has to be fair and also has to be abided by the
12 1985 D.C. Taxicab Commission Establishment Act.

13 In that act it states that the
14 issuance of either high classes, I mean H-tag,
15 should depend on the demand and supply in the
16 city.

17 Now when I see it, because I hark
18 every day, these Industry is saturated. Even
19 before the emergence of this Uber, Lyft and all
20 the other taxi companies.

21 If we continue to issue additional,
22 new additional, mind you, I said new additional

1 H-tags, it's going to make it a little more
2 saturated.

3 I can understand my friends, the cab
4 drivers testifying, that the issuance of H-tag
5 will help them bring in new cars. Bring general
6 income for their family members. I can
7 understand that.

8 But at the same time this Commission,
9 this Panel, has to consider those who already are
10 in the system. Who few of us are saturated.

11 You are going to drive us into
12 poverty, into welfare as I stated. Okay, that
13 has to be considered.

14 But I think is my time is limited
15 because I forget to register. So next time I
16 will register, have more time.

17 But I'll make one point only here.
18 Regarding the H-tag for those guys have written
19 the tags before, because that has been a long
20 practice of DCTC. You returning your tag, you
21 come back and you get into the system very
22 easily.

1 So that opportunity, that has been
2 taken away from them without proper advance
3 notice or that tag has to be returned to them.

4 Regarding one point, please, just 30
5 seconds.

6 MR. LINDSAY: You get ten.

7 MR. BIZUAYEHU: What?

8 MR. LINDSAY: Ten seconds.

9 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Okay. The other thing
10 is, for those guys who came into the system after
11 2006 in what was registration and title, co-title
12 was the companies. I have no, because see, that
13 already in the system.

14 Since you're not issuing new tags, if
15 that ownership should be transferred to them will
16 be fine. Thank you very much, I appreciate.

17 MR. LINDSAY: With those final points,
18 I encourage you to submit written testimony to
19 us, okay.

20 MR. BIZUAYEHU: I will do so, sir.

21 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, thank you,
22 thank you. Yes, next speaker.

1 MR. GHIDEY: Good afternoon,
2 Commissioners. My name is Leul, L-E-U-L. Last
3 name is Ghidey, G-H-I-D-E-Y. Register 111.

4 I've been driving the cab for 19
5 years. And trying to get my tag back was -- I'm
6 suspended for some reasons that I don't know
7 without any advance notice. But I couldn't get
8 my tag back. It's been almost close to three and
9 a half years or more than three years.

10 So driving a cab and renting when
11 someone, somebody says that sometimes I can't
12 even get the cars. So I don't have the time, I'm
13 not feeling good to talk about that. Thanks.

14 But I need my tag back and I don't
15 know the reason why I couldn't take my own tag
16 and been taken. So try to drive a cab with my
17 own and my own registration and my own new cars.

18 But I've been asking for the
19 Commissioner, so many times I've been told, be
20 wait and we'll let you know when further
21 evidence. And so many reasons.

22 But I cannot take it anymore. So I

1 couldn't find any car to rent because of the new
2 peoples who are registered in the companies. So
3 I have to be waiting three weeks, two weeks to
4 get a car or more than that.

5 So lately sitting home without driving
6 a car if I don't find one. So the Commissioner
7 considered this and let me have my own tag and
8 registration so I can have my own cab. Thank you
9 so much.

10 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much,
11 sir. Mr. Keith Sampler? I believe he was
12 previously registered.

13 Yohannes Hailemariam? H-A-I-L-E-M-A-
14 R-I-A-N. Yohannes Hailemariam. He just signed
15 up. No? Let me say it one more time. He just
16 signed up. Yohannes, H-A-I-L-E-M-A-R-I-A-N?
17 Okay.

18 Asefa Aga. A-S-E-F-A, A-G-A.

19 MR. AGA: Right here.

20 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. Azeb Adal. A-Z-
21 E-B, A-D-A-L.

22 Wow, okay. S-I-N-T-A-Y. Does that

1 name ring a bell? Okay. Okay.

2 And do we have, is that five? Okay,
3 that's five. All right. I think Mr. Sampler is
4 first. So, Mr. Sampler.

5 Well his name was first. I'm trying
6 to keep it in order. And he was already
7 registered. Please, go ahead, Mr. Sampler.

8 MR. SAMPLER: Good afternoon,
9 Committee members and employees, friends.

10 My name is Keith Sampler, Tag number
11 62762. Been a taxicab driver in the District for
12 32 years.

13 And I lost my tags via accident. I
14 held the tags. I had received compensation for
15 the vehicle, the loss of the vehicle.

16 And I held the tags for probably about
17 nine months. In fear of being penalized, I
18 turned the tags in.

19 And when I was contemplating buying a
20 vehicle I was unable to get my tags back.
21 Because I realized that, you know, in the past
22 that if you didn't turn you tags with the

1 insurance being expired, that you will be
2 penalized for that.

3 So I was willing to turn them in.
4 Surrender them. And I was just denied getting my
5 tags back.

6 And I came up here, not long ago,
7 inquiring if I could get on a list. Because I
8 was told at the cab company that I drove with
9 that you had to get on the list to receive your
10 tags back.

11 And the young lady at the desk told me
12 that the list was only open for 30 days. And I
13 left confused.

14 So I saw that they were having a
15 hearing so I thought I would come up here and
16 make my testimony and hopefully I will be
17 considered in getting my tags back. Thank you.

18 MR. LINDSAY: I think I can make a
19 comment. There was no open list to receive H-
20 tags. This process is to -- this Panel was
21 charged with study in the Industry to determine
22 whether we should issue H-tags. If so, how many

1 and under what consideration.

2 So I'm not sure what information you
3 received, but we are -- we're not issuing H-tags
4 on an individual basis.

5 MR. SAMPLER: Right.

6 MR. LINDSAY: Okay?

7 MR. SAMPLER: Yes, sir.

8 MR. LINDSAY: I just wanted to be real
9 clear with that. Okay, thank you.

10 Can we have the next speaker please?

11 Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, can you spell your name and

12 --

13 MR. HAILEMARIAN: Okay, good
14 afternoon. My name is Yohannes, Y-O-H-A-N-N-E-S.
15 And the last name is Hailemarian, H-A-I-L-E-M-A-
16 R-I-A-N.

17 Today I came here to testify. I'm a
18 cab driver since 1983. What happened is, as any
19 cab drivers who live here, a day-to-day based
20 life.

21 Saying that, I mean we don't have a
22 401K or no retirement or big thing to think

1 ahead.

2 Since I am a family man and I have a
3 three son, which two of them go to college and
4 one is young man, I return -- I surrender my tag
5 in 19, I mean 2012 due to my father illness. I
6 go back to my country, back and forth.

7 And by the time I came back in 2012 to
8 get my tag, they told me, without any notice, I
9 mean you shouldn't get your tag back. So, which
10 is no fair.

11 I mean I've been serving the city so
12 long and didn't get anything, feedback. I mean
13 we should get the same as other drivers that have
14 all kind of reasons.

15 What is our benefit? I mean we serve,
16 of course we live and I'm so glad to work for the
17 District. But what do I get then?

18 I mean I can't go back to the welfare
19 system. Right now I'm paying \$250 a week, which
20 I can't afford it. To even support my family.

21 So in order to this statement, this
22 Panel, I mean consider all these things and try

1 to get my tag. The same as other drivers. Thank
2 you very much.

3 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir. You
4 were pre-registered by the way.

5 Next? Sir, can you please spell your
6 name for us?

7 MR. AGA: Asefa Aga.

8 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. You can begin.

9 MR. AGA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
10 Unfortunately I broke my reading glasses.

11 Anyway, I'm actually here to testify
12 what is going on in this Industry. My background
13 is analyst. Actually I've been with -- who I
14 work for, held the Department for the State of
15 Maryland and Ethiopia as well.

16 So I just like driving. I started cab
17 driving like ten years ago. Which was in PG
18 County. I've been driving here only for a year.

19 Not only cab, but I drive Lyft and
20 Uber as well. So even though it's not really
21 long, as analyst I can see what is going on in
22 this Industry.

1 So there is a challenge. The test for
2 new drivers is changing. It's not only here,
3 everywhere.

4 Why Uber is interfering in the cab
5 industry, because cab industry was really weak.
6 We are unable to modernize their fleet.

7 There is no well-organized call
8 system. People want to call from their home.
9 From their, you know, workplace. From maybe
10 where they are entertaining themselves.
11 Somewhere.

12 Cab businesses in D.C., maybe they
13 have tried a radio system, which is really old
14 fashion, maybe 40, 50 years. That doesn't work
15 for this generation. For the new test.

16 That's what -- that's my argument. So
17 the Industry should change with new fleet of
18 vehicles and innovative drivers. Which is, are
19 the renters. Frankly speaking. I can say that.

20 So we can compete with unregulated
21 drivers actually invaded the business.

22 MR. LINDSAY: I have to cut you off.

1 Two minutes. Thank you for your testimony. If
2 you'd like to submit a written, some written
3 testimony, we'd love to hear your analysis.

4 MR. AGA: All right.

5 MR. LINDSAY: But I have to cut you
6 off. Thank you.

7 MR. AGA: Okay, I'm sorry.

8 MR. LINDSAY: Next speaker please.

9 MR. DERESSA: Sinfiayehn Deressa.

10 MR. LINDSAY: Please begin.

11 MR. DERESSA: As the Taxicab
12 Commission is getting ready to work under the new
13 structure, the taxicab drivers are also willing
14 to work with brand new wheelchair accessible,
15 fuel efficient and environmental friendly cabs in
16 and out of underserved areas of the cities.

17 Working with rented taxicabs is like
18 putting on unfitting gloves for the fight. The
19 rental vehicles are very fragile and highly fuel
20 consuming.

21 Most of the cabs are high mileage or
22 problematic and stay out of service for longer

1 period of time. That is while they are under
2 repair.

3 Lots of metal noises, dysfunctional
4 air condition, heater, check engine, air bags,
5 seatbelts and even broken seats. That can cause
6 tremendous health hazards on the drivers.

7 The new cabs use not even one third of
8 the amount of fuel that cab renters use a day to
9 make same amount of money. If tags are issued
10 for those using renters cabs, we will certainly
11 fuel -- buy fuel economy and hybrid cars.

12 Even experience in data shows that
13 previous H-tag owners are driving new and
14 compatible cars that are in accordance with the
15 new regulations.

16 Therefore you, D.C., can keep this
17 lovely former check holder city. That is the
18 most prominent political district in the world
19 and its subsidiaries, smoke-free. Instead of
20 then cab drivers 60 percent of their guys money.

21 Don't we deserve to have family time
22 since we are working 12 hours every day, seven

1 days a week to make our living and cover
2 expenses? We seldom spend time with our
3 families.

4 Why are we enslaved by the group of
5 cab company owners who escalate the rent prices
6 whenever they want? How could one expect good
7 customer service from disgruntle, discourage and
8 abused driver.

9 Dear, Panel Committees, for someone
10 who lives off selling fish, one --

11 MR. LINDSAY: Sir --

12 (Off microphone comments)

13 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Mr. Deressa,
15 how many taxicab do you have?

16 MR. DERESSA: Me?

17 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Yes.

18 MR. DERESSA: I don't have taxis.

19 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Oh, okay. Pass
20 the mic down please.

21 MR. DERESSA: Yes, sir.

22 MR. LINDSAY: Tesema Erkihun? The

1 name here is, T-E-S-E-M-A?

2 MS. ADAL: No.

3 MR. LINDSAY: Okay. So you'll be
4 next. Okay. And your name, ma'am?

5 MS. ADAL: Azeb, A-Z-E-B.

6 MR. LINDSAY: Oh, Azeb Adal.

7 MS. ADAL: Yes.

8 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. I apologize.

9 MS. ADAL: Yes.

10 MR. LINDSAY: Yes.

11 MS. ADAL: Good afternoon. Thank you
12 for giving me this opportunity.

13 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: Please pull the
14 mic a little closer to you so we can hear.

15 MS. ADAL: Okay. Good afternoon. And
16 that you for giving me this opportunity.

17 The first thing is --

18 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: I can't hear.

19 MS. ADAL: You can't hear?

20 MR. LINDSAY: Speak into the
21 microphone please. Loud --

22 MS. ADAL: Oh, okay.

1 MR. LINDSAY: -- project. Okay,
2 thanks.

3 MS. ADAL: Okay. Good afternoon.

4 MR. LINDSAY: There you go.

5 MS. ADAL: And thanks, you give me
6 this opportunity. The first thing is, if I don't
7 have a tag -- the problem of I don't have tag.

8 The first one is the rent. The rent
9 is just too high. I have to work hard, more than
10 12 hours to pay the rent and to pay my rent.

11 And the second one is, the car, when
12 I drive it on the highway it's smoking. I have
13 to jump out from the car. If I have a tag I can
14 buy a new car and comfort of the car.

15 So the belt is not working, the seats
16 not sliding. My backs pain, I have to slide to
17 reach the brake and accelerator.

18 If I have a tag, for this Commission
19 I ask to have a tag and to be free from this
20 slave. This slave to pay every month, every week
21 \$340. It's just too hard. And thank you.

22 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. Thank you,

1 Panel. I mean thank you witnesses, we appreciate
2 it.

3 I think there was Tesema Erkihun.
4 Please come up. And if there are any others that
5 would like to speak that have not spoken, please
6 sign in so that we can have -- and we'll record
7 your name and have you testify.

8 Okay. So it looks Mr. Erkihun is the
9 last witness. Okay, and Royale Simms. Okay.
10 Please, sir, you have, oh, you have three minutes
11 because you registered. Please go.

12 MR. ERKIHUN: Okay, thank you. Hello
13 everybody. My name is Tesema Erkihun. I would
14 like to say thank you, D.C. Commission.

15 First of all I want to say one
16 question. Why drivers renting are taken by D.C.
17 Taxi Company?

18 The DCTC Commission now has our
19 advantage taken by taxicab. I mean, I've been
20 two and a half years in the United States. I've
21 been in three months taxi driver. But if
22 something's happening in our cab, when it goes

1 to, I mean taxi company, we spend at least one
2 day, two day we be off. At least five, six hours
3 just for minor problem.

4 The car, which I'm driving, is not
5 just qualities, is not normal. It's -- I know
6 how the DMV certified those cars.

7 Why -- second, I have a question. Why
8 can't drivers get H-tag directly from DCTC
9 instead of having to go through a taxi company?

10 We cannot afford that much money.
11 It's not only the money, we spend our time. Why
12 are we to spend my time?

13 Because I don't have child. If they
14 say, two days, five days be off, I can be off.
15 But that's not the way to make money. To just
16 run a business.

17 So shall I get H-tag as a taxi driver.
18 Thank you. That's all.

19 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. We're going
20 to let Mr. Elfadil Khald go. He was already pre-
21 registered.

22 MR. KHALD: Hi, how are you doing.

1 Sorry I'm coming late.

2 MR. LINDSAY: Go ahead.

3 MR. KHALD: I don't know what we're
4 going to talk about. You know, the whole
5 confirmation.

6 But the reason -- hello? Yes. Okay,
7 but the reason I need the H-tag, I have a family
8 and I buy a tag from the company.

9 The guy every time he want me to pay
10 him, you know, for some more money for the tag
11 and the insurance.

12 The kind of the car I drive is an old
13 car. And I have, you know, if I get the H-tag I
14 can buy new car. If I buy new car I give a good
15 service for the customer. You know, like nice
16 car and good quality. Oh, sorry.

17 That is going to save gas, change the
18 look for the city, you know. Because everybody
19 that came will see the car is very nice. Is
20 going to be a happy.

21 And now the money I pay him, at least
22 the money is going to go for my kids and for my

1 family. And that's why I'm here.

2 Really we need this H-tag for, to help
3 us and help my family. And also for, you know,
4 for the good for the city. Also for nice car and
5 a good service for the taxi. Taxi service. Yes.

6 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, sir.

7 MR. KHALD: All right, thank you.

8 MR. LINDSAY: And I think our last
9 guest is Mr. Royale Simms. You have two minutes
10 to speak. Thank you.

11 MR. SIMMS: I want to make, thank you,
12 Panel. I want to make two quick points. Royale
13 Simms, Washington, D.C. Taxi Operators Teamsters,
14 Local 922.

15 The first point I want to make really
16 briefly, as we've submitted previously in the
17 past, the DCTC must restore the rights of drivers
18 who held the status of owner/operators and make
19 them whole.

20 Drivers followed the rule and they
21 couldn't have prepared for abrupt policy shift
22 without any notice. It's unfair that they were

1 not able to get their tags and the DCTC should
2 correct the course of the Agency's past mistakes
3 and give those drivers their tags back.

4 The second thing is something that's
5 come up recently. And it's the ability of
6 drivers with co-titled vehicles to change their
7 companies.

8 Because of the implementation of the
9 moratorium, DCTC has limited the ability of the
10 DMV to issue H-tags. So a good example of this
11 problem is Auto Ward Inc.

12 Auto Ward Inc. was a company sold to
13 District Cab Company without any notice to the
14 drivers. Many of those drivers had their
15 vehicles co-titled and registered with the
16 company and the driver.

17 Prior to the sale of the company, the
18 drivers had an agreement with Auto Ward to pay
19 \$35 a week for insurance fees. After the sell,
20 the drivers with co-titled vehicles were
21 subjected to an \$50 increase per week in their
22 weekly fees. So not they're paying \$85 a week.

1 District Cab Company justified the fee
2 as a licensed fee for use of the H-tag. Recently
3 they've changed this fee to be called the
4 associated fee for co-titled drivers.

5 Avoiding the discussing of whether the
6 fee is legitimate or not, the fee itself would
7 not exist if co-titled vehicles, co-titled
8 drivers could change and leave their companies
9 just like every other driver in the Industry. So
10 whether you're a lease driver or you're on the
11 title by yourself, you can leave a company when
12 you're ready to. Co-titled drivers don't have
13 that opportunity.

14 The DMV is implementing the H-tag
15 moratorium by maintaining a policy that no new H-
16 tags will be issued. They interpret this policy
17 of saying no new H-tags to include replacement H-
18 tags that have to undergo a title change.

19 Because many drivers are co-titled
20 with companies, in order to stay in compliance,
21 drivers you have to change companies would need
22 to change their title of the vehicle.

1 Even if a company releases the
2 ownership interest in the title and the new
3 company agrees to change the title, the DMV under
4 the current policy cannot issue H-tag. Even
5 though this transaction is H-tag neutral.

6 Drivers are effectively stuck with a
7 company that's on their title because any change
8 would invalidate the H-tag.

9 So we've seen the situations where,
10 you know, the precarious of a company not
11 complying with wheelchair requirements or the
12 taking advantage of drivers by charging them
13 extra fees because the drivers are stuck.

14 So co-titled drivers should be given
15 the same freedom. To choose a company their
16 associated with. Just like leased drivers and
17 just like individual owners.

18 And so I think this would be a good
19 step in the DCTC. Boost their morale, showing
20 drivers that they want to lower the cost the
21 drivers face, increase trust in the agency and
22 boost morale to lead to better customer service.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Mr. Simms.

3 MR. SIMMS: Oh, I have --

4 MR. LINDSAY: Written testimony? That
5 would be great. Would anyone else who has not
6 spoken on the record, does anyone else wish to
7 testify? Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: If nobody else
9 wants to testify, we may want to adjourn. Yes,
10 we're going to adjourn for a few minutes. And
11 give you a chance to see if you want to testify.
12 Five minutes break.

13 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
14 went off the record at 2:05 p.m. and resumed at
15 2:12 p.m.)

16 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: The meeting is
17 back in session.

18 MR. LINDSAY: With no more witnesses
19 testifying, I believe the Chairman can --

20 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: All right.
21 With no more witnesses be testifying today, there
22 will be an opportunity if you want to testify on

1 January, I mean July the --

2 MR. LINDSAY: 30th.

3 CHAIRPERSON TAPSCOTT: -- 30th, you're
4 willing to sign up to do that. And tell your
5 friends that they can sign up.

6 So we will have another second
7 hearing. And I appreciate everybody that came
8 out and signed up today. And the ones that
9 didn't sign up or had the hearing.

10 And so if nobody is to sign up today,
11 this meeting is adjourned.

12 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matted
13 was concluded at 2:13 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Panel on Industry Public Meeting

Before: DC Taxicab Commission

Date: 07-16-15

Place: Washington, DC

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Court Reporter

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