

## GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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## OFFICE OF THE D.C. TAXICAB COMMISSION

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## PUBLIC MEETING: PANEL ON INDUSTRY

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THURSDAY  
JULY 30, 2015

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The Commission's Panel on Industry met  
in the DCTC Hearing Room, Suite 2023, 2235  
Shannon Place, S.E., Washington, D.C., at 11:00  
a.m., Stanley W. Tapscott, Chairman, presiding.

## COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

STANLEY W. TAPSCOTT, Panel Chair,  
Commissioner

ANTHONY MUHAMMAD, Commissioner

BETTY SMALLS, Commissioner

## STAFF PRESENT:

MONIQUE BOCOCK, ESQ., Assistant General  
Counsel

ADAM MINGAL, ESQ., Assistant General  
Counsel

## OFFICE OF TAXICABS STAFF PRESENT:

CHARLES LINDSAY

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

(11:15 a.m.)

COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Good morning.

I'm sorry for the delay but it was business we had to set up this morning. Good morning. My name is Commissioner Stanley Tapscott. I'm the Chairman of the D.C. Taxicab Commission Panel on Industry.

This is the second and final hearing on the Panel on Industry. With me today are the other members of the panel: Commissioner Anthony Muhammad and Betty Smalls, and Charles Lindsay. Mr. Charles Lindsay is from the Taxicab Commission and we are working with him on this. The Office of Taxicabs.

The time is now 11:15 a.m. and we are in the Public Hearing Room at the D.C. Taxicab Commission, 2235 Shannon Place, S.E.

Earlier this year, the Commission directed the panel to investigate the current limit on taxicab vehicle licenses, commonly referred to as the H-tag moratorium, and to

1 publish a written report with recommendations to  
2 the full Commission concerning the moratorium.

3 To be clear, an H-tag is actually a license  
4 provided by the Department of Motor Vehicles when  
5 the Commission issues a vehicle license under its  
6 own rules.

7 The panel was directed to thoroughly  
8 evaluate all issues concerning the moratorium,  
9 which dates from January 2, 2006 to the present.

10 To do this, the panel decide to gather both  
11 written and oral comments from the industry, with  
12 written comments received first.

13 The written comments were provided  
14 through an H-Tag Information Form, which was made  
15 available from May 2nd through June 1st. The form  
16 allowed stakeholders to provide basic information  
17 about their views on the moratorium, and whether  
18 it should be lifted, and, if so, why. The panel  
19 received over 1,100 forms from drivers and  
20 companies, and has now had an opportunity to  
21 review the forms in order to get an accurate  
22 sense of stakeholder views in preparation for the

1 public hearings.

2 Today's second public hearing is an  
3 opportunity for the panel to receive more oral  
4 testimony on whether the Commission should lift  
5 the moratorium on vehicle licensing, and if so,  
6 whether there should be any limits or conditions  
7 placed on new licenses.

8 The panel expects to hear testimony on  
9 DCTC's licensing and market conditions affecting  
10 the supply and use of taxicabs in the District.  
11 We are interested in receiving specific comments,  
12 particularly on the likely impacts of changes to  
13 the numbers of taxicab licenses, the types of  
14 vehicles used, and Wheelchair Access Vehicles.

15 The panel will take all testimony into  
16 consideration, but we all speakers to please be  
17 specific in their comments today.

18 We encourage speakers to avoid  
19 repeating what has already been said many times  
20 at the Commission's monthly meetings, and in  
21 other regular forums.

22 The panel is well aware of the common

1 arguments for and against new vehicle licenses,  
2 so please try to focus on specific issues, and  
3 share with us your most original insights that  
4 others have not already provided.

5 As stated in the Public Notice,  
6 registered speakers will have three minutes to  
7 speak, and non-registered speakers will have two  
8 minutes to speak.

9 As you can see by the turnout today,  
10 we have many people who have registered to speak.  
11 Therefore, we will strictly adhere to the  
12 aforementioned time limits. We ask that you  
13 respect the timeframe so that all in attendance  
14 will have the opportunity to testify.

15 You are free to stay or leave after  
16 you testify. However, because the capacity for  
17 this room is 91 occupants, we ask that you be  
18 considerate and leave, so that those wishing to  
19 testify that are standing in the lobby of this  
20 facility, can enter this hearing room. We will  
21 take a 10 minute recess every hour, which we will  
22 announce shortly beforehand.

1                   Finally the record for this hearing  
2 will be open through August 13, 2015. If you are  
3 unable to testify today, but would like your  
4 testimony to be a part of the public record,  
5 please email it to poi@dc.gov, no later than  
6 August 13, 2015. Thank you.

7                   Thank you. We will now call the first  
8 five speakers and operate in that fashion.

9                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Good morning.  
10 A little bit of housekeeping. If everybody can  
11 turn their cell phones either off or on vibrate,  
12 that will be helpful because this hearing is  
13 being recorded.

14                   Secondly, as the chairman stated, we  
15 have a lot of folk rotating in, so I ask that  
16 once you've completed your testimony, that again,  
17 I can't require you to leave, but I ask that you  
18 be again consideration and leave, so that others  
19 can come inside. Okay?

20                   All right. We'll get started. I have  
21 a list of 58 pre-registered individuals or  
22 companies. They will be called first. After those

1 58 folk have been called -- and each one of those  
2 individuals get three minutes, a company or a  
3 group gets five minutes.

4 After those, the 58 have been called,  
5 we have a second sheet that I believe most of you  
6 have signed up for, for non-preregistered folk,  
7 we will then call you according to the order in  
8 which you sign up. Okay? So I ask you to be  
9 patient with us and work with us. And I also ask  
10 each person, as you come forward, please spell  
11 your name, because some of the names are a little  
12 difficult, so please spell your name, so that for  
13 the record we can have your name spelled  
14 correctly. Okay? All right. We can get started.

15 The first name is Brook Yoseph. Evelyn  
16 Ruiz. Jose Medrano. M-e-d-r-a-n-o. No? I'm  
17 going to spell your name. A-l-e-m-a-y-e-h-u  
18 Yadete. Again I'm going to spell this name.  
19 Andargachew Wolde. A-n-d-a-r-g-a-c-h-e-w W-o-l-d-  
20 e. Francis Bundu. Berhane Negash. B-e-r-h-a-n-  
21 e. Tesfaye Temesgen. Last name T-e-m-e-s-g-e-n.  
22 M.S. Cheema. C-h-e-e-m-a. Bhuiyan Mohammedhuda.



1 Last name M-o-h-a-m-m-e-d-h-u-d-a. Ibrahim  
2 Ahmed. Ibrahim Ahmed. Esmail Abadiga. Last name  
3 A-b-a-d-i-g-a. Mohammed Mhummed. Mohammed  
4 Mhummed. Tesfaye Ephrem. E-p-h-r-e-m.

5 Last name is Dhaliwal. D-h-a-l-i-w-a-  
6 l. Paulos Gossa. Last name, G-o-s-s-a. Safi  
7 Abramechu. Last name A-b-a-m-e-c-h-u. Temesgen  
8 Mendera. Last name M-e-n-d-e-r-a. Ed Wailes. S-w-  
9 a-i-l-e-s.

10 Gashaw Birbo. Gashaw Birbo. B-i-r-b-o.  
11 Saeed Khan. Saaeed Khan. Taera Jirapa. Please  
12 have a seat. Yemis Abeboykue. Last name A-d-e-b-  
13 o-y-k-u-e. Muhammed Akum. A-k-u-m. Sohail Sajid.  
14 S-a-j-id.

15 Kamran Ibrahim. First name K-a-m-r-a-n  
16 I-b-r-a-h-i-m.

17 Samuel Habtezion. H-a-b-t-e-z-i-o-n.  
18 Yokoub Yokoub. Kehinde Aderoju. A-d-e-r-o-j-u.  
19 Abdelmagib Bouataoui. B-o-u-a-t-a-o-u-i. All  
20 right. There we go. All right. And I apologize if  
21 I butchered your name. Please forgive. Okay.  
22 Okay. So we're going to start with Brook Yoseph.

1 And you do have three minutes, and we're going to  
2 strictly adhere to that. Okay? You may begin,  
3 sir.

4 MR. YOSEPH: Good afternoon. For the  
5 record, my name is Brook, B-r-o-o-k, last name Y-  
6 o-s-e-p-h.

7 Panel, thanks for giving us this  
8 opportunity to voice our opinion, and for the  
9 record, I would like to make it clear that the  
10 comments I'll be making today are solely mine,  
11 personal. Even though I've been associated with a  
12 different group, I'd like to make that clear.

13 As far as today's meeting, according  
14 to the Notice for Public Hearing, states  
15 specifically to focus on the structure under  
16 which H-Tag may be distributed and also reasons  
17 for lifting the moratorium, so I'd like to focus  
18 on those two specific.

19 Let's start with the structure under  
20 which H-Tag may be expanded. With this, I would  
21 like to suggest that the H-Tag distribution  
22 process must not include any new criterias that

1 were not previously there when issuing the  
2 operator's permit.

3 As you well note, drivers comprised of  
4 a DMV residence, so prioritizing one over the  
5 other might be difficult.

6 Secondly, allow all individual  
7 ownership of H-Tag, as long as the owner has  
8 established the proper business entity by adding  
9 the persons owning the H-Tag. As you well know,  
10 the One-Stop Form currently, in its format, only  
11 allows for companies and association, and I'm  
12 here to say giving individuals the right will  
13 also give us the opportunity to own their own  
14 cabs.

15 And following that, to allow  
16 individuals to register their vehicles for an H-  
17 Tag by adding the wording, individual owner, and  
18 providing space for their signature.

19 And the One-Stop Form, in current  
20 format, a driver would have to give his vehicle  
21 as well as the rights for the tag to an  
22 association or a company, and that is unfair.

1           And under the structure, again, allow  
2 individuals to form companies, and to apply for  
3 two or more vehicles as long as the operators are  
4 based within the District, and are following  
5 everything that is stated within Title 31.

6           And as far as the circumstance,  
7 requirement under which the DCTC should lift the  
8 moratorium, number one is licensed taxicab  
9 operators must currently possess valid DCTC hack  
10 operator license, obviously, and second, DCTC to  
11 complete and make available a specific list of  
12 approved taxicab vehicles, and all the process be  
13 clear for those that are applying for an H-Tag.

14           In closing, DCTC, and panel members,  
15 as you well know, there are many shortcomings  
16 with the current format of the District Title 31  
17 regulations governing the taxicab industry. Some  
18 of the regulations and amendments that were  
19 previously put in to place do not take into  
20 account the current circumstances affecting the  
21 distribution of taxicab industry, and is specific  
22 how the operating developments in computer

1 hardware, software, as well as phone apps, in  
2 conjunction with the moratorium on H-Tag has  
3 created an imbalance and unfair disadvantage to  
4 operators without an individual H-Tag.

5 Therefore, it's in the city's best  
6 interest for the Taxicab Commission to reinstate  
7 the open entry system, and let the market decide  
8 the equilibrium. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Please, no  
10 applause. We've got to get through this. All  
11 right? I get it. Thanks.

12 Ms. Evelyn Ruiz. And by the way, if  
13 you have testimony, we'd really like a copy of  
14 your testimony. You may begin Ms. Ruiz.

15 MS. RUIZ: Good morning to the  
16 Commission and to all the attendees. My name is  
17 Evelyn Ruiz. I am the manager of Classic Cab  
18 Association. I am here today to voice my humble  
19 opinion on the issuance of more H-Tags.

20 H-Tags should be issued with control  
21 and priority. First prior, companies and owners  
22 own H-Tag with existing PVIN. Second priority,

1 owners and operations that got PVIN, and returned  
2 their tags because they cancelled their  
3 insurance.

4 Third priority. Companies and owner-  
5 operators that want to invest on wheelchair-  
6 accessible v vehicles.

7 Fourth priority. Driver that got their  
8 pays in the year 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011,  
9 that physically and presently reside in  
10 Washington, D.C.

11 These drivers had been waiting for too  
12 long. I strongly believe the five instant drivers  
13 need not be issued an H-Tag at this time. On the  
14 hearing conducted July 23rd, 2015, I heard some  
15 testimonies from drivers, that they turn in their  
16 tags in the years 2009, 2010, and 11. They told  
17 us some of their stories, but I think they are  
18 just stories.

19 Here is the scenario at the Union  
20 Station cab line today. Rental drivers and  
21 owner-operators taxicabs, waiting time for  
22 passenger is about between 35 to an hour.

1       Imagine how long will it takes if we do not  
2       control the number of taxicabs. I agree. Uber  
3       number is uncontrollable, but they do not have a  
4       problem because they do not fall in line. They  
5       are not being watched by any police of DCTC  
6       inspectors. They park in front of hotels or  
7       anywhere. They can load and unload, and stop  
8       anywhere they want. Law and order does not apply  
9       to them.

10               Adding more cabs is not a solution to  
11       fight Uber. We need an app and technology like  
12       Uber. We need to discipline ourselves by paying  
13       our taxicab insurance, even we go for a month  
14       vacation. We cannot just cancel insurance and  
15       turn in the tags, expecting the DCTC and DMV to  
16       give him, or her, another one after three months.

17               Lastly, I would like to request again  
18       the reactivation of my two H-Tags, which I  
19       continued paying the insurance on them until the  
20       license plates expired in February 2014.

21               Let me just point out that I am not  
22       asking for new H-Tags. I have these tags with

1 PVIN in my possession. I just need them to be  
2 recommissioned. Thank you for listening and have  
3 a wonderful day.

4 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

5 Mr. Alemayehu Yadete. You may begin,  
6 sir. Go ahead. Spell your name, please, so that  
7 - for the record.

8 MR. JIRAT: Yes. My name is Tara Jirat.  
9 I'm the cab driver.

10 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Can you spell  
11 your name.

12 MR. JIRAT: T-a-r-a. Last name is J-i-  
13 r-a-t. Jirat.

14 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay.

15 MR. JIRAT: Okay. So first of all,  
16 thank you so much for giving for these chances  
17 to, for discussing about H-Tag. I'm the cab  
18 driver from a cab company almost for one year.  
19 So the car is - if you see the car, just you are  
20 surprised. The car is almost, it is like - it's  
21 - is very old car, like 2004. It is not for -  
22 it is not for service. The car is - totally, it



1 is too much - it is already - it is - the car  
2 is too old - the car. It is now got sometimes  
3 the airbag is coming out, sometimes the, the AC's  
4 not working. So any time I take the customer, the  
5 customer complain for me. Sometime police officer  
6 give me a ticket. This is because of the company,  
7 company not giving a good car or the new car for  
8 the driver. All drivers are just get, get  
9 accident on the highway because of companies not  
10 giving a right car for the driver.

11 So both driver and the customers are  
12 always - just they are battling on the highway  
13 and the other part of the cities. This is one  
14 big problem for drivers, other customers. So the  
15 car they give for us take too much gas. Just all  
16 - for example, sometimes I make like \$50 in a  
17 day, but I pay for the gas, like \$100. So always  
18 just I'm, I'm working like negative. I don't work  
19 nothing for myself.

20 Sometimes when, at the end of the  
21 month, I go to borrow money from my drivers, from  
22 other drivers, because I don't make any monies,

1 because - because of the car is not good. The  
2 car have - the car takes too much gas. I pay for  
3 gas. Sometimes, I pay for my ticket. Police  
4 officer give me a ticket because of air bag, and  
5 the other part of the vehicle is not operating  
6 very nice.

7 This is a big problem. So when I go to  
8 talk to my company about the car, the company is  
9 not treating to me. Instead of fixing the car,  
10 just as they running to me, to me. Like this car  
11 is very nice, this car is okay - go to work. So  
12 when I go to work, police officer give me a  
13 ticket. So the companies, still they are not  
14 treating drivers. We have a big problem, big, and  
15 a big problem. So I would like to say thank you  
16 for much for giving this chance for us to  
17 discussing each other.

18 So another one is only if you - only  
19 if you -- owners, the new company --

20 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: I hate to cut  
21 you off but that's three minutes.

22 MR. JIRAT: Yes.

1                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thanks. We have  
2 to move to the next gentleman here.

3                   Please spell your name for the record,  
4 sir.

5                   MR. YAAKOUP: my name is Yaakoup, Y-a-  
6 a-k-o-u-p. My first name. My last name is  
7 Yaakoup. Yaakoup Yaakoup. Yaakoup. Y-a-a-k-o-u-p.  
8 Well, my story is like five years ago, I go back  
9 home in 2010, I go back, and like every time I  
10 do, I take it to the DC - to the DC - take the  
11 tag number back, and then come back and take it  
12 back. This time I come back, they said no, we  
13 cannot really give you - you have to go to DCTC.  
14 Other way, you cannot have it.

15                   Now I come in to DCTC in two thousand  
16 and - it started in 2013, where - where Evelyn  
17 Johnson, she let me buy a car. After I buy a car,  
18 I put them in the car, and then I come back, two-  
19 three week. She left those. Now I, I don't know  
20 what I do. So I just go in again, again, again,  
21 again.

22                   So I go to the - I have to -- I have

1 all these people here to promise me to give me  
2 this, give me that, give me that. Go buy a car.  
3 Go buy this. I can never have it. Then I go rent  
4 a car. I cannot rent a car for \$300, and I am 70  
5 years old. I cannot work. I try, every time I  
6 come here and talk to somebody, give me a cut,  
7 you know, and nobody helping me. And I just want  
8 to know what I do. Right to date, somebody will  
9 tell me - please, what I do - do I have a tag  
10 number, or I just to sit down home and be  
11 homeless? One of these two things. I can have a  
12 tag number, please. Or I will be homeless. Thank  
13 you very much.

14 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

15 Kahinde Attaraju. Is that your name?

16 MR. BOUATAOUI: : Excuse me, sir.

17 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Is that your  
18 name? Mr. Ka --

19 MR. BOUATAOUI: Abdelmjid Bouataoui.

20 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay. Please  
21 spell your name for the record.

22 MR. BOUATAOUI: Yes. It's A-b-d-e-l-m-

1 j-i-d. The last name is B-o-u-a-t-a-o-u-i.

2 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

3 MR. BOUATAOUI: Good afternoon,  
4 gentlemen, and ladies. Thank you very much for  
5 giving us this opportunity to express our opinion  
6 about this matter.

7 We are really, as drivers, as cab  
8 drivers, we are struggling too much about this  
9 weekly stand fee, which is too high for us,  
10 because with the Uber competition and outside  
11 cars, 300 a week, it's too much for us. And then  
12 also the cars, they are not in good shape, they  
13 give us, like car that consume too much gas.

14 I have to pay like \$60 a day, plus  
15 300. We don't have that much time to spend with  
16 our family. You know, we have family, we have  
17 children, we have to spend time and with - we  
18 should spend some time with them.

19 And it happens to me now, the drivers,  
20 the number of drivers now in the, in the business  
21 is, is it's too many compared to the H-Tags.  
22 Now before I was looking for a job, it took me

1 like two months to find a job. So it was not  
2 easy.

3 And then when I talked to the company  
4 about this matter, like a week, they said if you  
5 want it, it's okay -- if you don't want, you can  
6 leave. Somebody else, we'll find somebody else to  
7 come work.

8 So we talk about this. Thank you very  
9 much

10 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

11 Okay. We'll continue down the list. Thank you.  
12 Thank you all for testifying. The next name on  
13 the list is George Akinkugbe. A-k-i-n-k-u-g-b-e.

14 (No response)

15 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Omi Omikunle.

16 Umi Omikunle. Last name O-m-i-k-u-n-l-e.

17 Is that you, sir? Okay. Please.

18 Mohammad Esghar.

19 (Pause)

20 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: I apologize.

21 Mohammed E-s-g-h-a-r.

22 (No response)

1 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Mohammad Khan.

2 K-h-a-n.

3 (No response)

4 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Olasoji

5 Olaniyi. O-l-a-n-i-y-i.

6 (No response)

7 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Tegen Desta.

8 Last name D-e-s-t-a.

9 (No response)

10 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Tesfaye Gebru.

11 B-e-g-r-u. Is that you, sir? Okay.

12 Tesfay Woldu. W-o-l-d-e. I mean d-u.

13 (No response)

14 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Raj Wali Khan.

15 Raj Wali Khan.

16 (No response)

17 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Shiraz Khan.

18 S-h-i-r-a-z Khan.

19 (No response)

20 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Gashaw Birbo.

21 G-a-s-h-a-w B-i-r-b-o.

22 (No response)

1 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Omar Jarmouni.  
2 J-a-r-m-o-u-n-i.

3 (No response)

4 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Nathan Price.

5 (No response)

6 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Chris Mills.

7 (No response)

8 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Arthur Lennon.

9 Please, sir.

10 Pete Harmon. Please, sir.

11 Hassan Hahmed. H-a-h-m-e-d.

12 (No response)

13 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Mangistu

14 Abebe. A-b-e-b-e. Mangistu Hamonout. H-a-m-o-  
15 n-o-u-t. Harold Novick. Harold Novick. Is that  
16 you, sir? Please. Yes. Okay. That's our five.

17 So let's see who we'll start with. Okay. As I  
18 asked the last panel, please spell your name.

19 Can you gentlemen pass down the microphone right  
20 here. Sir, can you pass the microphone down.

21 Thank you. All right.

22 Okay. And I'll set the timer here.



1 You ready? Okay. We can begin.

2 MR. AKINKUGBE: My full name is  
3 Olaseha George Akinkugbe.

4 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Can you spell  
5 it, please.

6 MR. AKINKUGBE: First name is O-l-a-s-  
7 e-h-a. George. G-e-o-r-g-e. Last name A-k-i-n-k-  
8 u-g-b-e.

9 DCTC, Shannon Place, Washington, D.C.

10 Sir, Submission of valid reasons for the  
11 reinstatement of H-Tags to all taxicab drivers. I  
12 humbly and respectfully state on the, on the list  
13 problems to be considered.

14 One. Double standard is never created  
15 in any industry, worldwide. The DCTC has created  
16 two standards by allow some drivers to own a cab  
17 while other drivers are enslaved to cab  
18 companies, who hire us at exorbitant prices.  
19 That's why the evolution of some competitors like  
20 Uber, Lyft, and so on.

21 Two. There is a secret of income on  
22 the side of DCTC. The revenue to be generated by

1 DCTC from H-Tag, from registration, inspection,  
2 from new drivers, are grossly and negligently  
3 diverted to cab companies, because more new  
4 drivers will buy more cars than the cab  
5 companies. We cannot cope with their -- a month  
6 for cabs.

7 Three. Other competitors. Other  
8 competitor drivers such as Uber, Lyft, and so on,  
9 own their own car. Why is DCTC drivers are  
10 treated differently? I submitted for your  
11 perusal and reconsideration of the issue. Thank  
12 you.

13 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

14 The second person was - please. sir.  
15 Yes. The gentleman right here. And you may begin.  
16 Thanks

17 MR. GEBRU: My name is Tesfaye Gebru.  
18 My remarks in the - or opinion on the structure  
19 of H-Tag license should be expanded to the pre-  
20 existing companies, and senior drivers, without  
21 any specific requirements.  
22 Those companies and individuals have been

1 fulfilled the requirements and were operational  
2 prior to the moratorium. The new application of  
3 an H-Tag license should be allowed to fill the  
4 gap opened, opening, or shortage of drivers based  
5 on seniority. And with regard, the fuel-efficient  
6 cars can only be achieved in the fleet by federal  
7 or city grant, or create - creative financing.  
8 The only requirements that should be done by the  
9 -- and own - the seniority basis. Thank you very  
10 much.

11 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

12 Arthur Lennon, I believe is next.

13 MR. LENNON: Arthur Lennon. L-e-n-n-o-  
14 n.

15 The effect of adding more H-Tags to  
16 the present system will be completely devastating  
17 to the lives and income of a lot of cab drivers.  
18 First of all, there are already too many taxis in  
19 Washington, D.C. The industry is over-saturated,  
20 in my opinion, as it is.

21 Of the possible 7,000 taxis that there  
22 are, there are probably more than 2,000 too many.

1 I work at night, mostly, and all I see driving up  
2 and down Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues are  
3 empty cabs and occupied Ubers. Adding more H-  
4 Tags would make it more difficult for me to make  
5 a living. If I work in the daytime, it's the same  
6 situation. It's a dog eat dog situation among  
7 some cab drivers.

8 Some of the newer cab drivers, who  
9 can't own their own cabs, have found out that it  
10 is very difficult to have to pay over 300 bucks a  
11 week to rent a cab.

12 Some have quit driving cab and found  
13 other jobs. The bill of goods that they were sold  
14 by someone has not turned out to be true.

15 The competition for passengers in D.C.  
16 is very severe, so much so that companies such as  
17 Uber, Lyft, and the Circulator bus, have taken  
18 away most of our business.

19 For instance, two weeks ago, Saturday,  
20 July 18, I sat on the cab stand at the Omni  
21 Shoreham Hotel from 7:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. In  
22 that interim, six Ubers came up and picked up six

1 different fares. After five - after 45 minutes,  
2 I picked up one passenger going to Dupont Circle  
3 for less than ten dollars. I decided not to go  
4 back to the hotel stand but to hit the streets.  
5 I did that for an hour. I picked up no one, and  
6 then I decided to stop wasting my gas, and I went  
7 home on a Saturday night, the busiest night of  
8 the week.

9 I only average about two to eight  
10 trips per day. That were not the case two years  
11 ago, when I averaged over ten trips per day. I am  
12 not an exception in this regard, for I've spoken  
13 to many cab drivers and they tell me the same  
14 thing.

15 I know of some drivers who are on the  
16 verge of losing their homes and are on food  
17 stamps.

18 One solution, in my opinion, is to  
19 have a waiting list for drivers who want to have  
20 an H-Tag, and when a driver retires, loses his  
21 license, or passes away, that tag will be  
22 available to the next person. Personally, as you

1 see, I'm handicapped, and I use my taxi income to  
2 supplement my SSI, Social Security. If I can't  
3 work in my cab, I might move back to North  
4 Carolina where I can afford to live.

5 And just one last thing. About a year  
6 ago, I picked up Mr. Ronald Linton from the Omni  
7 Shoreham Hotel, and took him to his apartment at  
8 38th and Macomb, and we had a discussion. At that  
9 time, he told me, in his opinion, he felt that  
10 there were too many cabs. We need about half of  
11 what we had already. He also said that he was  
12 trying to put apps in all D.C. cabs to contend  
13 with H-Tags. Well, Mr. Linton is gone now, but  
14 I'm just saying, in finishing, God rest his soul.  
15 Thank you very much.

16 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

17 Mr. Pete Harman, I believe is next.

18 MR. HARMAN: Yes. Peter Harman. H-a-r-  
19 m-a-n.

20 I've been a driver and owner for over  
21 20 years, and I find it very ironic, that the  
22 D.C. City Council, that agonized so much over

1 Wal-Mart coming in to D.C. and paying substandard  
2 wages, would deliberately impoverish thousands of  
3 cab drivers, pushing us in to sub-minimum wage  
4 condition. Our only - and allowing Uber, who  
5 pays their drivers about the same - an Uber  
6 drive who makes a third as much for doing the  
7 same amount of business that I do. After his  
8 expenses, he makes about half as much gross.

9 Basically, you're converting us from  
10 lower middle class income to working poor. And  
11 it's a deliberate policy, because before, nobody  
12 had their hand in our pocket. By allowing Uber  
13 in, where they take a 25 percent commission, and  
14 allow - and pushing - bringing all these new  
15 drivers in, they want to push us private owners  
16 out of business. We get thousand dollar fines for  
17 very trivial offenses. We get our cab impounded  
18 for check engine lights on. It's a deliberate  
19 attempt to put us out of business. I'm sure  
20 you're aware of this, because you're probably  
21 part of it.

22 Right now, there are 6- to 7,000 cabs

1 in D.C., which is the highest ratio of any city  
2 to residents. There's about ten, ten cabs per  
3 thousand people. The average in America is one-  
4 and-a-half per thousand. An app like Uber, or  
5 Lyft, you know, where there's not enough cabs,  
6 that makes sense.

7 Uber could have signed up thousands of  
8 cab drivers. You have the best cab service in the  
9 country. We are not allowed to compete with  
10 Uber. We have to have our cars inspected. We  
11 cannot - for example, I have a friend of mine,  
12 he developed an app. We're talking about setting  
13 up, so we would meet or beat Uber's price within  
14 the city all the time.

15 However, we cannot discount our fares  
16 with the credit card system that we have, because  
17 we get a thousand dollar fine if we use another  
18 credit card system.

19 We could easily beat Uber just on  
20 price. The only two reasons people use Uber is  
21 the price, and the advantage of a telephone app.

22 Now when I became a cab driver 20



1 years ago, I had to take an extremely difficult  
2 test. Only 7 percent of the people passed it on  
3 the first try. I passed it on the first try  
4 because I'd already been driving a cab in  
5 Virginia for eight years, and I'd been a bicycle  
6 messenger for 10 years. So I knew the city like  
7 the back of my hand. Still a very difficult test;  
8 but enabled you to own a cab.

9 Now the test has such difficult  
10 questions on it as: What body of water does the  
11 14th Street Bridge cross? What's the address of  
12 the White House? Twenty years ago, I had guys in  
13 my cab who are college professors now, and  
14 lawyers, who said they tried to pass the test  
15 when they were undergraduates. They couldn't do  
16 it. It's very difficult, it was very difficult;  
17 but it enabled you to own your own cab.

18 Now when I - my cab was in an  
19 accident, I forget how many years ago, I got T-  
20 boned by a Veola cab, Sun Tech Cab of Montgomery  
21 County, I paid the insurance on my cab for two  
22 year -- almost two years, to keep my tags,

1 because I knew that once I lost my tags, you guys  
2 would keep them.

3 And so basically, the fact that we had  
4 to go through so much, and - well, basically,  
5 the problem is if you have licensed drivers  
6 within five days, and they don't have any  
7 knowledge of the city --

8 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Mr. --

9 MR. HARMAN: - they're going to end up  
10 being as bad drivers as Uber drivers who don't  
11 know anything --

12 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Those three  
13 minutes. I've let you go a little bit. I really  
14 appreciate it.

15 MR. HARMAN: Yes; okay.

16 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: And, you know,  
17 for folk who have gone over, if you have written  
18 testimony, the record is open until August 13th,  
19 and we encourage you to get your testimony to us  
20 for the record

21 MR. HARMAN: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay. Thank you

1 so much. That's it for this panel. Thank you,  
2 gentleman. I'm apologize. Harold Novick.

3 MR. NOVICK: Yes, sir.

4 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Please forgive  
5 me, sir. Yes. You can begin, Mr. Novick.

6 MR. NOVICK: Thank you. Would you like  
7 me to deliver my comments to you now or --

8 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: You can deliver  
9 them to us now if you have them. I'll stop the  
10 clock.

11 MR. NOVICK: Thank you, Mr. Muhammad.

12 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

13 If you have pre-registered, you called  
14 or emailed, please let us know so that we can get  
15 you in prior to the non - folk who did not  
16 register. You can begin whenever you like, sir.

17 MR. NOVICK: Good afternoon,  
18 gentlemen. Thank you very much for having this  
19 hearing, and audience. My name is Harold Novick.  
20 N-o-v-i-c-k. I'm a lawyer admitted to Washington,  
21 D.C., and I'm representing LouLou TemTem before  
22 this hearing.

1 I've come to talk about two different  
2 things. One is the structure of the licenses and  
3 the H-Tags, and the other is the taxicab driver  
4 requirements.

5 Number one. This city is a wonderful  
6 city. It's a city that gets a lot of its revenue  
7 from tourists. Tourists come usually without  
8 cars. They need transportation. They need  
9 qualified transportation that is safe and  
10 assured. There are, and have been a lot of press  
11 about people being assaulted by taxicabs in the  
12 past, recently. It is this type of driver that  
13 DCTC ensures that we have. My position, our  
14 position on the current tag number is that they  
15 should be kept constant, but as they diminish  
16 because of death, or people leaving, they should  
17 be awarded to other people in line.

18 It is important that people be able to  
19 make a living, as you've heard testimony before.  
20 Today, they may have \$15 an hour, if that much.  
21 From that comes many, many, many expenses. Many  
22 of them are good. Some of them unnecessary. But

1 they're in competition with people that don't  
2 have these expenses.

3 I suggest that DCTC set up a  
4 Commission, and have a study as to income, as to  
5 cost, how to keep the drivers in line with  
6 insurance and education, and then decide, at that  
7 time, about the limits on the H-tags.

8 Right now, as you've heard, there's  
9 too many tags, too many drivers, and not enough  
10 competition, not - I'm sorry - not enough fares  
11 with the competition of Uber and others.

12 Second of all, many of the drivers are  
13 out-of-state drivers. There is a City Council  
14 ordinance that talks about what out-of-state  
15 drivers have to do to get a license. But some of  
16 those are inane, and are not really of value. I  
17 would submit, and suggest, that DCTC, as they  
18 have in the past, represent the taxicab drivers,  
19 and try to petition the City Council to make it  
20 easier for out-of-state drivers.

21 Most of the drivers here are out of  
22 state. They come here for a living. They come

1 here because they love the city. I think that in  
2 order to keep the quality up high, to keep those  
3 drivers that are regulated by you, by DCTC in  
4 line, that you have to limit it, and you have to  
5 take care of them. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.  
7 Thank you very much. Thank you for your  
8 testimony. I thank the entire panel for your  
9 testimony. Thank you.

10 I'm going to go back a little bit.  
11 Thanks. You gentlemen can leave. Thanks. And  
12 again, I can't require you to leave but I ask  
13 that you exit, so that others that are perhaps in  
14 the hall, or in the lobby area, could come in and  
15 testify. Thank you.

16 I was told that Mr. Nathan Price is  
17 here. If so, please come to the table. Ermias  
18 Biz B-i-z-u-n-e-h. Negussie Dinkte. Samuel  
19 Tesfamicael. T-e-s-f-a-m-i-c-a-e-l. Tafera  
20 Mussie. M-u-s-s-i-e. Dekele Kessa. K-e-s-s-a. Mr.  
21 Royale Simms. Okay. And Vince Gordon. Okay.

22 So I am going to go back over this

1 list, real quick, to see if someone who was pre-  
2 registered has come in. It's going to be very  
3 quick. Okay.

4 So Jose Medrano. Last name W-o-l-d-e.  
5 Last name, B-u-n-d-u. Last name, N-e-g-a-s-h.  
6 Last name, T-e-m-e-s-g-e-n. Last name Cheema.  
7 Mohammed Huta. Ibrahim Ahmed. Last name, A-b-a-d-  
8 i-g-a. Mohammed Mhummed. Tesfaye Ephrem. Last  
9 name Dhaliwal. D-h-a-l-i-w-a-l. Last name Gossa.  
10 Last name Abamechu. A-b-a-m-e-c-h-u. Last name  
11 Mendera. Last name Swailes. S-w-a-i-l-e-s. Last  
12 name Birbo. Last name Khan, . Saeed Khan. Yemis  
13 Adeboykue. A-d-e-b-o-y-k-u. Last name Akum, A-k-  
14 u-m. Last name Sajidm S-a-j-id. Kamran Ibrahim.  
15 Samuel H-a-b-t-e-z-i-o-n. Kehinde Aderoju. Falese  
16 Akintoye. Last name, E-s-g-h-a-r. Mohammad Kahn.  
17 Olasoji Olaniyi. O-l-a-n-i-y-i. Tegen Desta.  
18 Tesfay Woldu. Raj Khan. Shiraz Khan. Gashaw  
19 Birbo. Omar Marjouni. J-a-r-m-o-u-n-i. Chris  
20 Mills. Hassan Hahmed. Last name Abebe, A-b-e-b-e.  
21 last name H-a-m-o-n-o-u-t. Please bring him in.  
22 I did call him. If he's here, he can - Tyasimi

1 Audiobuku. Yes, please. I'm still going. Last  
2 name B-i-z-u-n-e-h. Last name D-i-n-k-t-e-a. Last  
3 name T-e-s-f-a-m-i-c-a-e-l. Last name M-u-s-s-i-  
4 e. Last name K-e-s-s-a. Royale Simms. And Vince  
5 Gordon.

6 Were you gentlemen's names called?

7 (Off mic comments)

8 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Yes. Please  
9 have a seat. Okay. So after this panel, we're  
10 going to take a ten minute break, and then all  
11 the folk who had not previously pre-registered  
12 but signed in to testify, we're going to get to  
13 you guys. Okay? So these are the people who pre-  
14 registered. We can begin. Mr. Nathan Price. And  
15 you guys have three minutes.

16 MR. PRICE: Good morning. My name is  
17 Nathan Price. I've been driving a taxicab in the  
18 District for 43 years. During the first, I guess  
19 12 or 13 years of my driving a cab, the Taxicab  
20 Commission was formed out of legislation of a  
21 Taxicab Act in 1985. But as I look around the  
22 room, and I see all these drivers fighting to



1 join the industry, I really wonder why.

2 In the first place, the industry has  
3 become something that was not only a service  
4 industry. You have an industry of great  
5 importance, the historical, for freed slaves  
6 before the Civil War, for immigrants coming from  
7 Europe at the turn of the 20th Century, and later  
8 on, for immigrants coming from all over the  
9 world.

10 When I first started driving, it was  
11 a fun thing to do. It was part time. It was a  
12 lot of fun.

13 Now the industry has become somewhat  
14 different since the Taxicab Act in 1985. It's  
15 become more of a predatory industry. These  
16 drivers struggle to make a living. At the same  
17 time, you have the City Council that has given a  
18 blanket rein to Uber and other services to come  
19 in, and take their business.

20 The last time the D.C. government did  
21 a study on taxicab was June of 1990, and that was  
22 the Office of - I think it was something like

1 Productive Management, something like that. But  
2 it was - and the only time the Taxicab  
3 Commission licensed a study, I believe it was in  
4 the mid 90s, and Jones, with Sharon Pratt Kelly,  
5 gave a company out of Canada a chance to do a  
6 study. Since then, we have been besieged, for  
7 almost 30 years, as an industry, with a non-  
8 regulator at its helm, because the most important  
9 thing for the industry is, first, to determine  
10 how many cabs are needed to deliver services, and  
11 how those services are meted out.

12 Title 31, which was the bible of all  
13 taxicab drivers. They carried it around, like a  
14 lot of people carry their bibles around. That was  
15 a quarter-inch thick - if that. Now that same  
16 instrument is about a foot and a half. Impossible  
17 to carry around.

18 Drivers are being blamed for  
19 everything from criminal acts, to just completely  
20 being idiots. The test has been dummed down, and  
21 I can't see where we're going anywhere. Anyway,  
22 I will get you a complete testimony because I've

1 just came back in town from vacation by the 13th  
2 of August, and I wish you luck in trying to do  
3 what you have to do. And I'd like to say hello  
4 to Ms. Smalls and Mr. Tapscott.

5 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

6 Mr. Yemis Adeboykue.

7 MR. ADEBOYKUE: Yes, sir.

8 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Yes. Please  
9 begin.

10 MR. ADEBOYKUE: Good afternoon. My name  
11 is Yemisi Adeboykue. I have been driving taxicab  
12 for 43 years. September 1972. I'm sorry. June  
13 1972. A few years ago, I was sick. I had stroke.  
14 Dropped my tags. When I came back, I was told I  
15 cannot have my tags anymore. This is, to me, very  
16 absurd. Can somebody lose his benefits? I'm  
17 asking, gentlemen, this, of good nature. Can you  
18 lose your benefits because you are sick? I lost  
19 my benefits, of not having tags because I was  
20 sick.

21 Washington, D.C. had a culture of  
22 allowing licensed cab drivers to own their cabs.

1 You took that culture away from us, so we can be  
2 working for cab companies who, in turn, hike up  
3 their cab rentals every week. This is slavery  
4 and oppression on part of drivers who rent cars  
5 because they cannot own, they cannot allow -  
6 they are not allowed to own their own vehicles.

7 Some cab drivers own their own tags.  
8 Some cannot. This is absurd. Everybody driving  
9 cabs should be allowed, regardless whether you  
10 are a new cab driver who joined yesterday, should  
11 be allowed to have their own H-tags.

12 If this is not allowed, I believe this  
13 is unfair and ungodly. Uber killed us. Are you  
14 bury us or them? There's no valid reason to take  
15 this culture away from us. I believe that any cab  
16 driver who wants to own their own cab should be  
17 allowed to do so, why some other who are already  
18 enjoying that privilege.

19 Gentlemen, I will say God bless you as  
20 you are listening to us. We are suffering. With  
21 us today, 200. Next week, 300. This is slavery.  
22 We beg you to reconsider this. God bless you.

1                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Can you pass  
2 the microphone down, please. Thank you. Please  
3 spell your name for the record.

4                   MR. OLASOJI: My name is Olaniyi  
5 Olasoji.

6                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Please spell  
7 it.

8                   MR. OLASOJI: O-l-a-n-i-y-i. Olasoji.  
9 O-l-a-s-o-j-i.

10                  COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

11                  MR. OLASOJI: Yes, sir. Thank you so  
12 much again, the panel, for this opportunity for  
13 second time. I came two weeks ago, and this is  
14 just a recap of what I said two weeks ago here.

15                  There's no more to be said. We just  
16 need something to be done on time. Like I said,  
17 just a recap. It will bring in so many good  
18 things to DCTC, to the entire Washington, D.C.  
19 Firstly, 2008, we bring innovation, and  
20 challenges in to the system, as they allow Uber  
21 to have the - because of weak specification that  
22 were made by their boss, to have, maybe from 2008

1 and upward, driving cars.

2 We spend, we like to have confidence,  
3 everybody back on there. We all know that. You  
4 may not. I'm tired, you want to relax and go  
5 home. Not with our cars. With trucks. You know,  
6 sometimes your brake is making noise. Even with  
7 the seats. I mean, we drive cab, so we know what  
8 we're facing.

9 The companies just give you because  
10 you don't have no choice. You have to pay your  
11 rent. You have to pay your bill. So whatever they  
12 give you is what you take. That's what it is. If  
13 you allow us to have our own tag, innovation will  
14 come in, and the system will change. People will  
15 be happy.

16 Secondly, between confidence, only  
17 customers. If I go from here to New York, they  
18 don't have anything to fear. Maybe your car will  
19 break down. Your car is good, it's brand new,  
20 it's okay. So where we're going, they realize,  
21 because they have confidence, the way you got on  
22 the road.

1                   Number three. There are the freedom of  
2                   choice. Not everybody will have the money go and  
3                   buy a brand new car, but for the people that are  
4                   ready to do that, pay for the H-tag, buy their  
5                   brand new cars, allow them to do so.

6                   They don't have the money should go  
7                   back to the company and number four. If we  
8                   encourage our drivers that already being lost to  
9                   Uber --

10                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: I have to cut  
11                   you off. Your three minutes is up. I've actually  
12                   let you go over.

13                   MR. OLASOJI: Oh, thank you so much.  
14                   God bless you.

15                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: When I do this,  
16                   wrap it up a little bit. Okay? Just try. All  
17                   right. Ready? Please spell your name for the  
18                   record, sir.

19                   MR. FALESE: Akintoye Falese.

20                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Can you please  
21                   spell it.

22                   MR. FALESE: First name is A-k-i-n-t-

1 o-y-e. The last name is F-a-l-e-s-e.

2 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD:

3 MR. FALESE: Thank you. I want to thank  
4 this panel for giving me the opportunity again to  
5 speak out, and to say my mind, to I guess press  
6 the kind of situation which the taxi driver  
7 facing. Some of the company that we rent cab  
8 from, they provide the services but on an  
9 absolute cost. We don't have no choice we have to  
10 pay. We have to go by them.

11 But I want to appeal to this panel to  
12 consider us, irrespective of the year that we've  
13 been driving, in as much as we are being  
14 certified by DCTC. We are the face - I mean, the  
15 licensed, drive cab, and to make choice of having  
16 H-tag should be considered.

17 That will bring good effectiveness in  
18 this business. We have opportunity to get a cab  
19 of our choice, of wish that is, you know, that we  
20 are going to put up to complete - compete  
21 reasonably in the market, going by the  
22 deregulation that has been in the system. The



1 Uber and the solo, you know. That will bring  
2 effectiveness, confidence, and courage to the  
3 drivers, and to the consumers. Confidency - the  
4 right with confidence, because they are paying  
5 for the service. So if this panel consider us,  
6 it will be a very good thing to promote our  
7 business, to promote us, and to like take us out  
8 of this bonded that we are in, because we have to  
9 pay some particular amount every week, 250 every  
10 week to a cab company, and riding in an obsolete  
11 car, which we don't even like make out there.  
12 Sometime we have to, we have to like burn our ass  
13 out, because we have to pay. If you don't pay,  
14 then you, you can't ride. Go God bless you as you  
15 consider us. Amen.

16 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

17 Thank you, sir. Please spell your  
18 name.

19 MR. WOLDU: Last name Woldu, or l-d-u.  
20 First name Tesfay. This is second panel, summary  
21 or testimony we've given. In our opinion, the  
22 structure of the H-T tag license should be

1 lifted, and the moratorium of H-Tags, to be  
2 expanded to all qualified, without any specific  
3 requirements. The only requirement should be  
4 qualification in adding new technology and  
5 services to meet the demand.

6 This will give the public choices, and  
7 competitive on-demand services that will have  
8 benefits in service and cost for the citizens of  
9 Washington, D.C.

10 Any excess, overage, saturation, will  
11 be corrected by the market in a short period of  
12 time. In addition, we strongly suggest the D.C.  
13 Taxi Commission, as much time they're wasting or  
14 talking about this kind of panel, should be  
15 talking about the so-called demand service  
16 companies - Uber, Lyft, and all that kind of  
17 stuff. They should be regulated, and go through  
18 the same spectrum that everybody else is going  
19 through.

20 It is not fair to have a moratorium,  
21 and asking what the people would like to do. Let  
22 the market dictate what needs to be done. As

1 simple as that. Let's not waste time and energy,  
2 and that's our opinion.

3 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.  
4 Thank you. As stated, we're going to take a five  
5 to ten minute break, I think everyone can use a  
6 small break, and when we come back, I am going to  
7 go down the list of non-preregistered voters, and  
8 each of you have - you have two minutes. Okay?  
9 Thank you very much.

10 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
11 went off the record at 12:21 p.m. and resumed at  
12 12:40 p.m.)

13 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Hello. The  
14 meeting is back in session. Can you guys please,  
15 and ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats,  
16 so we can get started. All right.

17 So I know I mentioned earlier that we  
18 were going to go, start from the list of  
19 individuals who had not previously registered.  
20 However, there were about four or five folk who  
21 actually pre-registered, that I spoke to, that  
22 I'm going to call up, and they get three minutes.

1 The difference between pre-registered, and non,  
2 and Boku did not pre-register, is one minute.  
3 Boku pre-registered, gets three minutes. Boku  
4 didn't register, gets two minutes. Okay. So let's  
5 begin. Mr. Oluwasfeni Omikunle. Vince Gordon.  
6 Biz - B-i-z-u-a-y-e-h-u Hamout?

7 MR. HAMOUT: Hamout.

8 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.  
9 And Mr. Massoud. Each of you have three minutes  
10 apiece, and now I'm going to ask a question. Is  
11 there anyone else who pre-regi - oh. Ed Swailes.  
12 Please. Thank you, sir. I almost forgot. Thank  
13 you. Please have a seat. Yes. Is there anyone  
14 else in this room that pre-registered? You called  
15 me, you emailed me, you emailed to the P.O.  
16 address, that I have not called?

17 (No response)

18 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay. Great.  
19 Okay. So this is the last panel of folk who have  
20 three minutes apiece, and we can begin.

21 MR. OMIKUNLE: Good afternoon. My  
22 name is Oluwasfeni Omikunle. Thank you for

1 giving us this opportunity of speaking in  
2 presence of you, sir.

3 My opinion is straight to, for all my  
4 colleagues, they are spoke before, and they spoke  
5 correct. How we can get a tag, is good for a  
6 business outside there to get - a good driver  
7 as we have been trained. We go through the  
8 training, go to class of giving our customer the  
9 way we address the customer, the way we treat the  
10 customer. After we give, we are -- and getting a  
11 car, the rent. For me, I spend more than eight  
12 weeks of getting a car, after I get ID. After I  
13 get ID, I spend on that eight weeks of repair a  
14 car. The car rents for 250 per week. And for me,  
15 I need to work before I can get, get \$20, because  
16 of competition outside, Uber, Lyft, and all that.

17 So my opinion is if we get a tag, at  
18 least maybe the cab driver, or my colleague, they  
19 can buy a new car, confidence with driver, the  
20 customer. So we can compete with Uber. Because  
21 right now we work hard. Sometimes, one of  
22 colleague, they went to the hotel, to sleep

1 there. So a lot of the - we do all we can do to  
2 get, to take of family. So we - I appeal to the  
3 panel, if you can issue a tag for us we can get a  
4 new car. We can get at least minimum of 1999 up  
5 to date. So that's my opinion. Thanks so much.

6 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.  
7 Thank you for staying within time. Thank you.  
8 Next. Please.

9 MR. GORDON: Hello. My name is Vincent  
10 Gordon.

11 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

12 MR. GORDON: I've been driving a  
13 taxicab in Washington, D.C. since 1988. I've  
14 raised my family, bought my home in the District,  
15 all while working either part time or full time  
16 as a cab driver. Currently, I live with cancer,  
17 and am a compensated veteran, who is rated  
18 permanently and totally disabled. My disability  
19 ended my 24-year career as a finishing carpenter  
20 and a project manager for a company that built  
21 restaurants in the Metropolitan Washington Area.

22 Fortunately, for me, working as a cab

1 driver supplements my income. Personally, I'm  
2 hoping that the issuance of Ace Tag will ensure  
3 that my lifetime commitment as a cab driver would  
4 be secure. I like to think I've operated in the  
5 industry like a responsible small business and  
6 contributed my service as a star ambassador, most  
7 visitors encounter when they come to the nation's  
8 capital.

9           With the ability to acquire Ace Tag,  
10 I realized, I can realize the possibility of  
11 participating in the Wheelchair Accessible  
12 Program. I've invested, the last seven years,  
13 trying to develop a working knowledge of the  
14 wheelchair accessible industry. As an operator  
15 of a wheelchair van, that is a taxicab, I'm  
16 familiar with the task of maintaining that type  
17 of vehicle.

18           Secondly, as a D.C. business owner, I  
19 had, in 2009-2010, coupled with a District cab  
20 company, and offered several contracts, several  
21 bids and contract proposals to operate as a Metro  
22 Access paratransit contractor. While proposing

1 those endeavors, I established invaluable  
2 relationships with Metro Access, along with a  
3 thorough understanding of the American Disability  
4 Act requirements.

5 I've also developed contacts with  
6 companies like Mobility Works, a wheelchair van  
7 conversion company, and also registered our  
8 company to attend Federal Transportation  
9 Department paratransit instructor seminar that's  
10 conducted locally, so we would have properly-  
11 trained drivers we were to hire.

12 From an industry point of view, I  
13 believe that the issuance of a limited amount of  
14 personal or company Ace Tag, with restrictions in  
15 place, would ensure the availability of a  
16 continued workforce that will allow the industry  
17 to address inadequacies that can enhance taxicab  
18 ridership. Lastly, as a driver that worked as an  
19 office manager assistant with Imperial Cab  
20 Company, and now doing special projects with Dial  
21 Cab, I can see where the issuance of Ace Tags  
22 will allow some companies to recapture the



1 financial burden mandated by some of the  
2 requirements that will come with the changes  
3 that's needed for the taxicab industry to remain  
4 a dominant force in Washington transportation.

5 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

6 When I wave my phone, that just means you have  
7 about 10 or 15 seconds. Thank you for adhering  
8 to the time. I appreciate it. Next up, please,  
9 and pronounce your name.

10 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Thank you very much.

11 My name is Haim Bizuayehu. First name, H-a-i-m,  
12 Last name B--i-z-u-a-y-e-h-u. Thank you for  
13 this opportunity, and I will start by just asking  
14 a question, everybody in this room, including the  
15 panel, and my fellow cab drivers.

16 I think there is in the regulation,  
17 Title 31, which was essentially passed or adopted  
18 here by this Commission, there is an age  
19 requirement for the taxicab vehicles. And I just  
20 want to know that - if that's still active or  
21 not. I have a reason why I ask this question and  
22 I'll come back to it. Let me start by saying

1 this. I think many of us in the street - I mean,  
2 as a cab driver, I drive like 14 or 15 hours a  
3 day, and my cab, fellow cab drivers also do the  
4 same thing. And probably you, the pa -- people in  
5 the panel, my flag is car taxicab on the streets  
6 of Washington, D.C. And when you raise your hand,  
7 you can see how many taxicabs convert to pick you  
8 up. That shows how the market is saturated.

9 Especially with images of these  
10 companies, Uber and Lyft, and Sidecar. With Uber  
11 only by itself, about 14,000 drivers in  
12 Washington, D.C. You can imagine how the market  
13 is, how the drivers already on the system  
14 struggling to make their living.

15 Then I posed a question when I, last  
16 time in my testimony for this. I heard many of  
17 the cab drivers in here, my fellow cab drivers,  
18 testify that if H-tags issued, that we can bring  
19 in new vehicles. I think it is a requirement,  
20 starting 2017, that each and every driver in  
21 Washington, including taxicab companies to bring  
22 new vehicles as a requirement. So Washington,

1 D.C. taxicab vehicles, starting from 2017, should  
2 be a minimum of five to seven years old, I think  
3 to bring in to the five years old, and to retire,  
4 seven years old. So relatively, we're going to  
5 have newer vehicles ,including rental. So those  
6 people who are driving rental vehicles, they're  
7 going to start in a newer vehicle. So that  
8 shouldn't be the only justification to convince  
9 this panel or the Taxicab Commission for issuing  
10 new H-Tags. Instead, H-Tags - I'm not opposing  
11 issuing H-Tags. But first, a proper study has to  
12 be done.

13 I think that, as I mentioned in my  
14 testimony about two weeks ago, the 1985 Taxicab  
15 Commission establishment, that also required that  
16 the Commission to do a study, a comprehensive  
17 study, I believe two years, every two years, and  
18 it was that issue tags depending on the demand  
19 and supply.

20 But let me wrap up. So he told me to  
21 wrap up. So but after saying that, I want to  
22 mention two things, very critical things. One,

1 those drivers who has lost their vehicle tags,  
2 because it has been the long practice of this  
3 Commission, this Taxicab Commission, and DMV, for  
4 those drivers to turn in their vehicles and  
5 reissue to them after they bring their new  
6 vehicles or come back from vacation. That  
7 suddenly stopped. So there are many drivers who  
8 lost their tags because of that. That is not  
9 fair. They should be reissued to them, and also  
10 - I mean, if I were them - I'm not giving bad  
11 advice - they can go to court and sue this  
12 Commission, because you take the tag without any  
13 advance notice.

14 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

15 MR. BIZUAYEHU: For 2006, because I  
16 don't want to be --

17 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. BIZUAYEHU: For 2,000 drivers. Just  
20 one second can I get?

21 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

22 Thank you.

1 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Mr. Massoud.

3 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Please spell  
5 your name for the record.

6 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Massoud Medghalchi.  
7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify again  
8 before this panel, as I've done many times  
9 before.

10 CHAIRMAN TAPSCOTT: Would you spell  
11 your name for the record.

12 MR. MEDGHALCHI: M-a-s-s-o-u-d. Last  
13 name is M-e-d-g-h-a-l-c-h-i.

14 CHAIRMAN TAPSCOTT: Thank you very  
15 much.

16 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: And I'll give  
17 you another five seconds.

18 MR. MEDGHALCHI: D.C. taxi industry has  
19 been subject of whims of several interest groups  
20 in the past, none of which have ever had, or  
21 acted in the interests of the majority of the  
22 comprising members, namely, the owner-operators,

1 who, by the way, comprise over 70 percent of the  
2 industry.

3 I will mention some of these. Number  
4 one. An unfair rate structure under which a ride  
5 across town in the early 80s was 25 cents more  
6 than a bus ride, so federal workers and the  
7 Congress would not inconvenienced or stressed  
8 financially.

9 Two. Legislature pretending to create  
10 jobs, which would be D.C. legislature.

11 Number Three. DCTC acting  
12 inappropriately by peddling illegal licenses,  
13 created an oversaturated and hostile environment  
14 for the cab drivers. This was an unfair playing  
15 field for drivers and company owners.  
16 This created a financially unprofitable industry,  
17 which has, and cannot recover from. Now we are  
18 considering even more licenses without  
19 appropriate studies. Special interest groups are  
20 covering up valuable statistics, i.e., Uber,  
21 Lyft, and Sidecar.

22 A balance cannot be achieved with so

1 much deception. We already have more vehicles per  
2 capita than any other city in the industrialized  
3 world, not just United States. If D.C. cabs pay  
4 the lowest rents in the nation, and cannot meet  
5 their financial obligations like they're crying  
6 about, then the market must be oversaturated.

7 As they're saying, they cannot pay  
8 \$250, and all the three jurisdictions near us go  
9 above 450, all the way to about 700 and change.  
10 Nor can the special interests fulfill their  
11 promises of new vehicles when the drivers cannot  
12 afford the older vehicles.

13 These special interests will promise  
14 anything to muscle their way unfairly in to the  
15 industry. Legislation, regulation, or precedence,  
16 has never promised an H-Tag for any licensed  
17 drivers. They need to know that. When do we stop  
18 catering to these special interests that only  
19 recycle lawyers with ancient rhetoric?

20 I recall Ms. Vasquez, who is a lawyer  
21 for one of these groups, claiming her clients  
22 were not against H-Tag limits, at a hearing

1 before Chairman Linton. This was last year. When  
2 will the limits be appropriate then? After her  
3 clients get their H-Tag, and the next lawyer  
4 comes, and she wants another thousand H-Tags?

5 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

6 MR. MEDGHALCHI: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Mr. Swailes.

8 MR. SWAILES: Good afternoon. My name  
9 is Edward Swailes, and so I need to spell that  
10 last name?

11 CHAIRMAN TAPSCOTT: Spell your name.

12 MR. SWAILES: Okay. No problem. It's S-  
13 w-a-i-l-e-s. First name is Ed. First, let me  
14 thank the Commission for having this opportunity  
15 to speak before you, and in the interests of  
16 transparency, I should also mention that I have a  
17 contract with TransCo as a manager of driver  
18 instruction and industry relations.

19 And in preparing this presentation  
20 today, I also did a collaboration with the  
21 National Association of Railroad Passengers, who  
22 helped me prepare some of the statistical data



1 that I'm going to give out to you today.

2 Let me back up here and say that, you  
3 know, I think that the Commission's  
4 consideration of the H-Tags, just having that on  
5 the table is something that gives us all an  
6 opportunity to speak about it, and give us a  
7 chance to air obviously different views in terms  
8 of whether they should be or not be. But I think  
9 it gives an opportunity to clear the air as well,  
10 in terms of where each entity of individual  
11 stands in that position.

12 First, I will say my position in all  
13 this is that I would recommend that the  
14 Commission do, that the Commission would consider  
15 - not just consider but actually put in effect a  
16 lifting of the moratorium on H-Tags. And my  
17 reasoning for saying that is that I think that  
18 the market itself is clearly in a growth pattern,  
19 and part of that growth is because of an increase  
20 in population, which we all know has occurred.

21 And according to the Wikipedia, in  
22 2014, the District had a population of 658,893

1 people, an increase of 36,000 just over one year.  
2 That's an average of 3,000 new residents per  
3 month. Those residents, by large numbers, are  
4 young, professional, and have a lifestyle that  
5 does not lend itself to car ownership but for the  
6 use of vehicles like vehicle for hire. Bicycles.  
7 Go-cars You know, most of those persons are not  
8 doing ownership.

9 For that reason, I think that that has  
10 created an opportunity for other organizations,  
11 or companies like Uber, who have come in to this  
12 city, and who do make money and don't have a cap  
13 on the number of drivers that they can have. They  
14 continue to not just grow the market, in terms of  
15 making the market bigger because of their  
16 investment in advertising, their investment in  
17 community services, their investment in their  
18 drivers.

19 That I think is - and an example of  
20 that, which I want to share is, I just, the other  
21 day, was in Southeast, and I saw where Uber was  
22 having a free gas campaign. If you sign up to be

1 with Uber, you get free gas.

2 There's no cap on their number of  
3 drivers. If they can afford to give free gas out  
4 to their drivers and pay them, obviously, then  
5 that must say something about their model,  
6 business model, that is being implemented where  
7 they make money and their drivers make money.  
8 Instead of the District cab drivers, owners,  
9 Commissions, I think going through the hassle of  
10 competing with each other, my - that was two? I  
11 was all ready --

12 (Laughter)

13 MR. SWAILES: I'm just getting started,  
14 man.

15 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: The wave just  
16 means you have about 15 seconds.

17 MR. SWAILES: I'm going to skip. Okay.  
18 Okay. The Uber piece. But just to give some  
19 data, quick data. Uber, which now controls about  
20 40 percent of the market, that market has grown  
21 by about 20 percent over the last two years. So  
22 that means cab drivers that were in Washington

1 prior to Uber have lost, really, about 20 percent  
2 of the market. That 20 percent could be gained  
3 back with the continued growth of the market, if  
4 we were able to increase our H-Tags --

5 (Applause)

6 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: I have to stop  
7 you there, sir. You have some fans there, but I  
8 have to stop you. But look - I do encourage you  
9 to --

10 MR. SWAILES: I want to turn this in.

11 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Submit your  
12 testimony to us. Submit your testimony to us for  
13 the record, so that we can put --

14 MR. SWAILES: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Because you  
16 have some very valuable information. So as we  
17 deliberate, those are some of the factors that we  
18 take in to consideration.

19 MR. SWAILES: Could I just end by  
20 saying --

21 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

22 MR. SWAILES: Thank you. For this. But

1 I want to submit it as a revised.

2 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: That's fine.

3 The record remains open until August the 13th.

4 MR. SWAILES: Great.

5 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay. And if  
6 there's anyone else that would like to submit  
7 written testimony, we do encourage you to submit  
8 that. Okay? Thank you, panel. I appreciate it.  
9 The next several panels have two minutes apiece,  
10 so I'm going to call your names according to the  
11 list submitted. And again, we can't force you to  
12 leave but we do encourage you to exit the room  
13 once you've testified, so others may have an  
14 opportunity to occupy the room.

15 Okay. First up, I think Yakoub Yakoub  
16 already spoke. You can ask him, not me. Okay.

17 Mohamed Ali. Please. Gizau H-s-a-s-h-s-a-r -

18 excuse me - h-s-m-a-r-e. So okay. Mr. Afzal.

19 A-f-z-a-l. Lemmesa Hunde. L-e-m-m-e-s-a H-u-n-d-

20 e. No? Kadissa Bahru. B-a-h-r-u. Reshaun Reda.

21 R-e-s-h-a-u-n R-e-d-a. Mohammad Shemu. S-h-e-m-

22 u. Last name Ab3be. First name is Abebaw. A-b-e-

1 b-a-w. A-b-e-b-e.

2 Alemayehu Ayane. A-y-a-n-e is the last  
3 name. A-y-a-n-e. Zelalem. Z-e-l-a-l-e-m. Last  
4 name is G-u-d, I believe l-e. Tadele Bayeta. B-  
5 a-y-e-t-a. Eyoel Tesfaye. E-y-o-e-l. Okay.

6 Abdul Ariyibi. A-r-i-y-i-b-i. Oh,  
7 okay. B-i-w-a-c-h-e-w. Is that you, sir? Abdul.  
8 Okay. Okay. Okay. We have five. Okay.

9 Gentlemen, you each have two minutes  
10 to speak, and we can begin.

11 MR. ALI: Good afternoon, panel. My  
12 name is Mohammad Ali. M-o-h-a-m-e-d. A-l-i.  
13 Mohamed Ali. I'm -- really been here, you know,  
14 I'm very happy to be, you know, in front of the  
15 panel, but the notice was very short. I just  
16 heard two days ago, and I didn't be informed, but  
17 what I'm coming to say today is a lot of  
18 companies, they are complaining about not to be  
19 issue for H-Tag. The fee they have is - it's  
20 not fair, because other D.C. - I'm - I've been  
21 in D.C. for over a decade, and I have no tag. So  
22 what I'm saying, the market is dead. The Uber,

1 they have the market, has D.C. visitors who ride  
2 their cabs. We can buy our own car and compete  
3 with them.

4 Most of our customer, they say because  
5 the car we driving is old, unclean, un - because  
6 we cannot compete with the Uber. But the Uber  
7 drivers, they own their own car. So if we got our  
8 own car, we could compete with them. And the  
9 industry, the taxi industry, they fear because  
10 they want to lose. This is America. They don't  
11 have to fear. This is free country. We make  
12 competition. Competition is open for everybody.  
13 So I'm asking, you know, the panel to be,  
14 consider to open, to give the H-Tag.

15 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

16 MR. ALI: You're welcome.

17 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Please. Can you  
18 pass the microphone down, please. Thank you.

19 MR. AFZAL: Good afternoon everyone.  
20 My name is Faisal Afzal. So my concern about  
21 DCTC, like my question is, one hand, DCTC giving  
22 the license, but other hand no tags. So we have

1 to go to a different cab companies, and the cab  
2 companies, they charge us their choice of the  
3 rent. Some of them. And another thing is like,  
4 you know, we working in a district, in a city,  
5 one of the best city in the nation, but their  
6 cabs are not good. Their cabs are stinky. Some of  
7 them like, you know, old cabs. So if we could  
8 ever to get the H-Tag, so we have opportunity, we  
9 can put in nice decent car. So that's going to  
10 help the business, that's going to even help the  
11 consumer. So my request is, so H-Tag should be  
12 requesting for DCTC, and they should allow the H-  
13 Tags, so that's going to help all the drivers who  
14 are hustling on the roads, and dealing with the  
15 other cab companies, which has gone really tough  
16 for them.

17 So that's going to -- big relief for  
18 the drivers. So that's going to help the  
19 business, and some of them, some cab owners  
20 saying they're going to put the new vehicles on  
21 2017, I just heard. So why not now, instead of  
22 waiting for 2017. We just got to do the action,



1 just got to make that happen, instead of like,  
2 you know, anything like - I appreciate.

3 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.  
4 Again, when I wave it, it just means you have  
5 about another five or ten seconds.

6 Please spell your name, sir. Yes?

7 MR. BAHRU: Taddesse Bahru. B-a-h-r-u,  
8 my last name. Okay. Thank you for the  
9 Commissioner and the panel, and my first - my  
10 title is on the back side of the slogan. The  
11 slogan is: The driver is extended arms of the  
12 DCTC Commission.

13 MS. BOCOCK: Could you repeat that  
14 again.

15 MR. BAHRU: The driver is extended arms  
16 of DCTC. Do you understand what I mean? So it is  
17 three corner of - it's benefit and use, and it  
18 is very important for the DCTC. The first one is  
19 we need H-Tag because when, on the weekends, on  
20 Friday and Saturday, I've been working for D.C.  
21 drivers, I think for four months. Within this  
22 four months, I -- with the Friday and Saturday,

1 it is a lot of, a lot of, a lot of customers.  
2 Within 7:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m., I think for -  
3 I got for 25 fares. That's it.

4 So the rest, from Monday to Friday,  
5 from 9:00 to 10:30, there's a lot of flagging  
6 hands, especially the Congress, the Senate. So  
7 this is nation capital city. So we need issue  
8 tag. We need tags.

9 First, these convertible cars, for  
10 instance, for the hybrid car. That's it?

11 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: You have 15  
12 seconds.

13 MR. BAHRU: Okay. And the rest of the  
14 business is healthy, safe, and the net services  
15 for the nation capital, the next market is easily  
16 convertible, and the third one's due to the gas  
17 consumptions. Because the hybrid gas is  
18 electrical car. So you don't need for too much  
19 gases. So due to these reasons, it's concerning  
20 for all the Commissioner, the panelists, and to  
21 take into considerations giving the H-Tag.

22 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you for

1 your testimony. Next. Please spell your name for  
2 the record.

3 MR. TESFAYE: Thanks so much. My name  
4 is E-o-l-e-y-o-e-l. And the last name is T-e-s-f-  
5 a-y-e. I would like to say thank you very much  
6 for the panel giving us this opportunity to speak  
7 out.

8 So I would like to start from  
9 reminding the DCTC some points that we are - the  
10 DCTC, or our district's strong arms, and well-  
11 trusted, well-trained, and licensed by the  
12 office, by like your office.

13 So why all these questions? Why all  
14 this, like hearings? And why all this meetings to  
15 provide us H-Tag? While non-trusted, or non-  
16 issued companies, or drivers, are doing the same  
17 thing? And I would like to ask you one question  
18 too. Don't you give us an ambassador? We are your  
19 ambassadors. Why all these questions to provide  
20 your ambassador the H-Tag?

21 Okay. The other thing. Remember, you  
22 are saying, or questioning your ambassador to

1 give up ,or to provide H-Tag. It's not our  
2 museum, or the Newseum, or the even the Capitol.  
3 It's your drivers, or the cab drivers, the first  
4 attraction of our District. So imagine treating  
5 this - drivers like this. So the rental  
6 companies are not treating us very well. And I'm  
7 fini - I'm done almost.

8 So I am saying that the DCTC is not  
9 treating us as well. So I'm not sure if the DCTC  
10 is doing a favor for the rental companies, but we  
11 are - we just need, you know, the tag. So it's  
12 not only Uber or Lyft should be considered as to  
13 remove from the business, but also some companies  
14 there, which are treating the drivers very  
15 unfairly. So you should reconsider this, to  
16 remove some companies too from the business.

17 And last, I want to say that we, your  
18 ambassadors, deserve the tag without any  
19 questions. Thank you very much.

20 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

21 Please, sir, pronounce your name.

22 MR. ARIYIBI: Hi. My name is Abdul

1 Ariyibi. A-b-d-u-l. A-r-i-y-i-b-i. Thank you  
2 for giving me, and us, the opportunity to speak  
3 to you today. This is my first time. Someone told  
4 me about it, and then I just popped in. And you  
5 guys might have to excuse me a little bit. I've  
6 been driving cab for about 25 years, and last  
7 year I went home - well, I got sick, I had to go  
8 home for a few months, and then came back. Got  
9 okay, and then I had to be readmitted at the  
10 hospital, Inova Hospital in Virginia, Fairfax  
11 County. And came back. I couldn't get back my  
12 tag. And this really create a lot of hardship on  
13 me, and a lot of other drivers that I've spoken,  
14 and drive, and sitting here today.

15 We are asking you, kindly, to think  
16 about our situation, economic situation, social  
17 situation with our family, because now we have to  
18 put in many, many hours in order - in fact, we  
19 don't even meet our economic obligation to pay  
20 these cab companies. It's really hard on us.

21 We have given our services to  
22 Washington, D.C., and like the last speaker just

1 said, we have gone through a lot of scrutiny by  
2 the DCTC Office, the hack inspectors, and the  
3 police officials. Please consider us, and  
4 helping us. Thank you very much.

5 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

6 Thank you.

7 All right. B-i-w-a-r-c-h-u. C-h--I  
8 think your initials is E.G. I can't - your  
9 cursive is a little tough to read. Mr. Eskinder  
10 Damonte. D-a-m-o-n-t-e. Wassinu E-n-d-a-l-a-w.  
11 Napoleon Tesema. Gurmu - your last name is Gurmu  
12 G-u-r-m-u.

13 Yee N-a-i-n-g. You are --

14 (Off mic comments)

15 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: G-u-r-m-u?

16 Okay. Yee Naing. I'm going to go back through  
17 this list, and maybe some folk who signed up  
18 didn't show up.

19 Last name H-s-m-a-r-e. First name is  
20 Gizal. L-e-m-m-e-s-a-h-u-n-d-e. Last name B-a-  
21 h-r-u. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Rishon  
22 Rita. Mohammed Shimu. A-l-e-m-a-y-e-h-u.

1 Zalemum G-u-d-l-e. B-a-y - oh, I'm sorry. He  
2 testified. Excuse me. B-i-w-a-r-c-h-u. Again,  
3 initial is E.G. I believe, or E.J. I can't  
4 understand your writing. Sorry.

5 D-a-n-t-e. W-e-s-s-a-g-n-u. Napoleon  
6 Tessema. Yee N-a-i-n-g. E-n-c-h-a-l-l-e-u.  
7 First name, D-e-m-e-k-e. Okay.

8 E-m-i-r-u. Okay. L.T. are your  
9 initials? Okay. Michael S. S-i-s-a-y. Sisay.  
10 Israel Gomez. Please have a seat. That's three.  
11 Again, E-n-d-a-l-a-w. Signed up twice. F-a-n-t-a-  
12 h-u-n. S-h-u-b-e. Please have a seat. And Mr.  
13 Gashaw Birbo.

14 Okay. Because Mr. Gashaw Birbo signed  
15 up, he pre-registered, I'm going to give him  
16 three minutes, and the rest of the panel gets two  
17 minutes. Okay. So all right. You have testimony.  
18 Thank you, sir. Okay. All right.

19 Again, please spell your name for the  
20 record. Thank you. You have two minutes.

21 MR. GUSU: I was also pre-register, so  
22 I can get three minutes instead of three - two?

1                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay. please  
2 begin.

3                   MR. GUSU: Good afternoon. My name is  
4 Emiru Gusu. First off, I would like --

5                   COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Please spell  
6 it. Please spell it for the record, so we can be  
7 very clear. It's being recorded. Go ahead.

8                   MR. GUSU: E-m-i-r-u, first name. And  
9 last name is G-u-s-u. Good afternoon. First of  
10 all, I would like to thank DCTC for arranging  
11 these panel discussions to share our opinions on  
12 H-Tags. Then I'm in support of DCTC to issue H-  
13 Tags to anybody, a person who have face ID, or a  
14 company or association, who can purchase a new  
15 car, which is fuel efficient, comfortable for  
16 passengers, and fitted with wheelchair  
17 accessible.

18                   Please don't give tags only to taxi  
19 companies, and push the drivers to work for taxi  
20 companies. That is totally unfair, and  
21 discrimination. I am a cab driver, as well as my  
22 colleagues, are facing the following problems



1 from District of Columbia taxicab companies due  
2 to DCTC are pushing us to rent cars from taxi  
3 companies instead of providing our own tags, tag  
4 numbers.

5 Among the problems we encounter from  
6 the cab companies are: Increasing of rent from  
7 time to time; the absence of cabs for rent; the  
8 quality and comfort of the cabs available for  
9 rent is very poor; the cars are getting older and  
10 driven for many years. Because of this, our  
11 customers are not satisfied with our service.

12 Poor customer service from taxi  
13 companies, and the owners are not willing to  
14 listen to our complaints when we first - also we  
15 are unable to compete with other independent cab  
16 drivers, and other independent drivers working  
17 for Uber and Lyft.

18 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: I have to stop  
19 you there. Thank you for your testimony, sir.  
20 Thank you.

21 Next, please. Please spell your name  
22 for the record, if you don't mind.

1 MR. ENCHALLEW: Yes. Thank you very  
2 much for the opportunity. My name is Demeke  
3 Enchallew. D-e-m-e-k-e. Last name, E-n-c-h-a-l-l-  
4 e-w.

5 CHAIRMAN TAPSCOTT: Pull the mike a  
6 little bit closer to you.

7 MR. ENCHALLEW: All right. Thank you,  
8 sir.

9 I like to start by thanking DCTC for  
10 the new apps that we are testing now. I'm one of  
11 the guys who's testing the app, and app is going  
12 to be very, very nice, and it's going to reduce  
13 most of the complaints here I think, if we  
14 advertise it, and let the people know. The app's  
15 going to bring back most of the business that we  
16 are losing with other app companies.

17 And by saying that, to use this app in  
18 proper way, and to expand the business, DCTC  
19 should issue the H-Tag because we're going to  
20 take on-call businesses from the app, with the  
21 technology, so we have to be everywhere. So we  
22 need more drivers on the street, to the people to

1 use the app. And I'm - in my opinion, it's  
2 better to even - to give H-Tag for Uber drivers  
3 to have their own car, and to bring them back,  
4 and use the app, and get more money for DCTC and  
5 to have a better service for the - for  
6 themselves and for the DCTC.

7 The other thing is my personal thing,  
8 I want to add is, families with disabled children  
9 should have H-Tag, because this will give them  
10 flexible schedule to take care of the kids, and  
11 to make more money for living, and keep them from  
12 getting more assistance from Government. So  
13 please try to issue with families who got  
14 disabled children, H-Tag, and that will help lots  
15 of things. That's my point. Thank you very much.

16 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

17 Thank you. Mr. Gomez.

18 MR. GOMEZ: Yes. My name Israel Gomez,  
19 and I-s-r-a-e-l G-o-m-e-z. And thank you very  
20 much for bringing this agenda, and I've been  
21 driving taxi for 19 years, and this time I return  
22 my tag because I fell ill and I went back home,

1 and I didn't know, when I came back, I didn't  
2 know they lock up the system, the status, or -  
3 and I that I'm telling that it's very hard to  
4 rent a car because the business very slow, and I  
5 don't want to become like homeless or something  
6 like that.

7 So I - please give H-Tag or something  
8 like that, because we are citizens, Washington,  
9 D.C. We vote for the mayor, Muriel Bowser, and  
10 also for council member, and also for the House  
11 of Representative, Eleanor Norton, and that's  
12 because we are citizens, and we should have the  
13 same equal rights like everybody else. Like big  
14 corporation come in, and they give the - got the  
15 business, switches over, or something like that.  
16 And thank you very much.

17 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, Mr.  
18 Gomez.

19 Yes, please.

20 MR. SHUBE: Good afternoon. My name is  
21 F-a-n-t-a-h-u-n. Last name, S-h-u-b-e. Again,  
22 thank you very much for giving me an opportunity

1 to speak to the panel, to issue H-Tags. I was  
2 licensed since 2009, and I was always asking when  
3 I can get H-Tag and buy own car, which is  
4 efficient for economy, for gas, hybrid gas, put  
5 on the street, and can drive, helping myself or  
6 my family, and also help for the public. But we  
7 are what is pushing the problem, they are - is  
8 to rent a car, or cab companies. The cab  
9 companies are not competitive in market of 21  
10 Century like we, or other, my colleague on panel  
11 spoke earlier. And they are not competitive  
12 enough, and that's why so many company came, and  
13 by increasing the productive of - in the taxis,  
14 or public service, by 20 percent, like he said,  
15 and - so we need all people who has license, and  
16 should be given opportunity once you are, we also  
17 professional drivers, we deserve it as a citizen,  
18 make, to get own car, efficient car, and issue to  
19 us H-Tag and to make market, profitable in the  
20 market, and thank you very much for listen me,  
21 and for consideration to issue.

22 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.

1 MR. BIRBO: Good afternoon. My name is

2 --

3 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: You have three  
4 minutes Mr. --

5 MR. BIRBO: Gashaw Birbo.

6 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Yes.

7 MR. BIRBO: First of all, I would like  
8 to say thanks to DCTC for listening to drivers  
9 and the customer concern, and arrange this great  
10 discussion on improving customer service, and  
11 safety, by motivating drivers who are directing  
12 the primary impact on the taxicab business.

13 As trained and licensed for hire,  
14 business drivers, we deserve to be given the  
15 priority to operate in the District than other  
16 competitors like Uber, Lyft, and other drivers  
17 who work for themselves, buy their own car,  
18 though they never pass through any authorized  
19 department's policies. My second point is the  
20 existing driver associations have been protesting  
21 whenever DCTC tries to modernize and to make  
22 change on the cab business.

1           As an example, they had been opposing  
2 the proposed rule to restore meters as pre  
3 customers' requests, so that they can pay by  
4 credit card. So it should not be new to DCTC if  
5 they bring selfish and imaginary reasons to  
6 oppose issuance of H-Tag to us.

7           Is that because Uber and other  
8 associations are saying the business is  
9 saturated, or just to oppose, bluntly, as usual,  
10 DCTC's proposal to modernize the business with  
11 qualified and devoted drivers.

12           With thousands of other competitors,  
13 for-hire cars operating in the District, what is  
14 the meaning of opposing trained and qualified  
15 drivers to work and to compete? Individuals and  
16 the associations gave up to compete in the  
17 market, and they are happy to make easy money  
18 because of the opportunities that DCTC arranged  
19 for them to rent their car to us, so that we can  
20 work 16 to 20 hours to pay their unfair rent, to  
21 go home - and to go home with nothing.

22           In my belief, DCTC is here to help

1 drivers and listen to customers' demands, working  
2 in favor of nonexistent, unqualified, and the  
3 traditional cab companies and associations. That  
4 did nothing in modernizing the business and  
5 listening to basic customers' demand. If DCTC is  
6 responsible for regulating vehicles-for-hire  
7 business in the District, what is the reason for  
8 worrying about limiting the number of H-Tag that  
9 should be issued to the licensed drivers, when  
10 other competitors are increasing their number in  
11 thousands, with no limit and control?

12 So let DCTC give us the tag, make us  
13 free from slavery, and let the market decide  
14 eventually. And finally - I just got a little  
15 bit. Based on the current quantity and the  
16 quality of taxis operating in the District, the  
17 customers still demand more fuel-efficient, which  
18 are accessible, and safe cab services operated by  
19 devoted and trained drivers, regardless of  
20 thousands of unregulated companies that should  
21 not be considered legal by DCTC. Thanks.

22 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.



1 Thank you. All right. I will continue down the  
2 list of non-preregistered individuals. Abdul  
3 Wahab Hassan. A-b-d-e-l. W-a-h-a-b Hassan. Okay.  
4 Excellent. Abdul Mek Shifa. S-h-i-f-a is the  
5 last name. S-h-i-f-a is the last name. K-e-d-i-r  
6 Ibrahim. K-e-d-i-r Ibrahim. Okay. Please. What's  
7 your name, sir?

8 MR. HASSAN: Abdul Shifa.

9 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay. Abdul  
10 Shifa. Okay. Negi Tochi. Negi. N-e-g-i N-e-g-i  
11 Tochi. N-e-g-i. Ziri Hun. Z-i-r-i H-u-n-f-e-y-s-  
12 s-a. F-e-y-s-s-a. Dawit Wossaru. D-a-w-i-t W-o-  
13 s-s-a-r-u. Yarid Lakew. L-a-k-e-w. L-a-k-e-w. G-  
14 e-t-i-n-e-t T-i-y-i-h. Okay. All right. Thank  
15 you. Tesfaye Lima. Tesfaye Lima. Okay.

16 So those are the remaining names. We  
17 can begin. This is the last panel. Okay.

18 MR. HASSAN: Good evening. My name is  
19 Abdul Wahab Hassan. A-b-d-e-l W-a-h-a-b Hassan.  
20 H-a-s-s-a-n.

21 Probably you recognize from the number  
22 of participating drivers, that there is, has been

1 a problem. The Commission was more interested in  
2 the modernizing of the business and were not  
3 interested in - or giving enough interest to the  
4 drivers. Solving the H-Tag issue will solve many  
5 of their problems. It's not too late. I think  
6 myself, I think that the problem could be solved  
7 by returning the balance between the carrier of  
8 licenses and the H-Tags. I know it might not  
9 happen right away, it could not happen right  
10 away, but it could happen if you have a strategy,  
11 and if this is your intention, it will happen  
12 gradually.

13 How can you get tags? A company who is  
14 not taking care of the car, who is not  
15 maintaining it, who is refusing to do the safety  
16 for the car, for the drivers, should be - you  
17 should be able to put rules to get this tag be  
18 available to driver. Driver are more trusted to  
19 maintain their cars.

20 Also there are individuals who own two  
21 or more tags while others are renting, and those  
22 are - they are not - they don't own these for

1 money, they just own it so they can only own one.  
2 So there are ways to get tags, and, you know,  
3 gradually. You should have a plan, so gradually,  
4 we would have the balance between licensed  
5 carriers and tag carriers. Of course I would ask  
6 for those who already have one, and to have the  
7 priority of getting their tags back. Thank you  
8 so much.

9 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.  
10 Please pronounce your name for the record.

11 MR. SHIFA: Good afternoon. My name is  
12 Abdul Mek Shifa. A-b-d-u-l M-e-k Shifa. S-h-i-f-  
13 a. First thing foremost, I would like to thank  
14 the panel discussion and the DCTC who facilitate  
15 this panel discussion. Is very important for us  
16 to explain to our griefs, and we are grieving  
17 because of not getting the right car to drive in  
18 - the right customer but with the right cars,  
19 and because as the previous speaker noted, we  
20 become like -- because DCTC gave us, and hijacked  
21 us, you know, because DCTC gave us the license  
22 but not the ownership of H-Tag. And this reminds

1 me one of my American history class. Frederick  
2 Douglass once said like when, during his  
3 emancipation speech: The slave becomes free from  
4 the slave owners but slave to the street. We  
5 become slaves of the street, because we go -  
6 like even nowadays, like they talk each other,  
7 the companies, when we - if you are not fired or  
8 something happens to you in one company, you  
9 cannot get a car from other companies. They're  
10 communicating that much.

11 And so DCTC is like I think  
12 responsible to modernize this technology, because  
13 it's giving - right now, it's giving a Third  
14 World customer service, because the cars are very  
15 dilapidated, they're worn out, everything. If you  
16 give us a chance to have H-Tag, we'll buy fuel-  
17 efficient cars, and disabled also for - to  
18 facilitate every individual who comes to my car.

19 And so how could you expect a smile to  
20 come to my face while I'm feeding the taxicab  
21 company before I feed my children? And so I  
22 would like to encourage and recommend DCTC to

1 issue an H-Tag for all drivers, without any  
2 distinction, whether they come today or not.  
3 Thank you very much.

4 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you. Sir,  
5 please spell your name for the record.

6 MR. SHIFA: Good afternoon. My name is  
7 Kedir, K-e-d-i-r. Last name, S-h-i-f-a. Shifa.  
8 First of all, thank you for this panel, and the  
9 reason why I would like to ask DCTC to issue H-  
10 Tag is a lot of my colleagues have been mention  
11 the reason why. We cannot compete with like Uber,  
12 Lyft, such companies, because we don't have, you  
13 know, decent car. You know? There's - I have a  
14 lot of customers encounter on - while I'm  
15 driving taxi, they been telling me that the  
16 reason why switch to Uber - because the cars are  
17 not comfortable. That's the main thing.

18 Personally, I would like to have H-  
19 Tag. I can make my own money; you know? By the  
20 end of the week, my money goes to the rent. You  
21 know, like my friend just mentioned, we are  
22 slave, slave outside. We cannot make money. The

1 money you make goes to rent. So you end up  
2 nothing. Zero. Just rent. So we need H-Tag to,  
3 you know, facilitate, buy decent car, and go out  
4 on road and compete with Uber; you know? There is  
5 app - DCTC app which is - we can beat Uber if  
6 everybody, all drivers get H-Tag, we can beat  
7 Uber with that app.

8 So I would really appreciate if you -  
9 you know, it's not supposed to be an issue, to  
10 give H-Tag for driver. This is a free country.  
11 This is the world capital, yet we still work as  
12 slave, you know.

13 So thank you for that opportunity.

14 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you.

15 MR. TIYITI: Thank you, panelists. My  
16 name is Gestinet, G-e-s-t-i-n-e-t. Last name is  
17 T-i-y-i-t-i. When we are hitting the -- very,  
18 very different issues, including the ones like  
19 providing the fuel efficient and the one,  
20 wheelchair accessible, still before like, before  
21 this hearing decided, or to give final decision,  
22 still the DCTC is supporting or like favoring the

1 companies, because I saw on the Web site, the  
2 DCTC is favoring for the companies grants like to  
3 purchase the new wheelchair accessible, like more  
4 than 750,000. Still the DCTC is supporting or  
5 favoring for the companies for wheelchair  
6 accessible.

7 We are requiring to purchase the new  
8 one, or the new one, and the fuel efficient -  
9 why they are doing this one before this hearing  
10 is decided? You know, still, we are not  
11 considered in this requiring or in this issue.  
12 This is my question.

13 The other one. It's not at this time  
14 regulating or like limiting the taxi drivers from  
15 getting H-Tags, it's not like - it's not up to  
16 them, because as you see private drivers, or  
17 private transportation, they are controlling the  
18 market because they are out of regulation or out  
19 of their regulation, because they are doing  
20 freely, you know, because they have their own  
21 tag, their - they have their own and everything.

22 So we need same kind. We do like this

1 service freely and competently. Thank you very  
2 much.

3 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you, sir.  
4 Appreciate. Thank you. Thank you, panel.

5 Okay. So that was the last of the folk  
6 who registered, who had signed up and pre-  
7 registered.

8 Is there anyone else in the you guys  
9 can leave. Thanks. Is there anyone else in the  
10 room that would like to testify, that have not  
11 pre-registered, or has not signed up today? Is  
12 there anyone who'd like to testify? If so, please  
13 come to the table and we will allow you to give  
14 your name, and give your testimony.

15 All right. This will be our last  
16 person to testify. Okay. Please spell your name.

17 MR. TEMTEM: Thank you very much for  
18 giving me a chance. My name is Luleseged Temtem.  
19 L-u-l-e-s-e-g-e-d. Last name T-e-m-t-e-m.

20 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay.

21 MR. TEMTEM: I really - I am the  
22 driver, which I have a tag after 2006. So I am



1 affiliated with a company. Because of that, I  
2 have to be in the company to drive in D.C. So  
3 because of that, I been forced to pay more monies  
4 and extra monies at the same times. Also without  
5 my willingness, they can put us anywhere they  
6 want without telling us.

7 So because of that, why we being we  
8 suffer like that just because we don't have a  
9 tag. So on my case, I personally, I believe I  
10 need to have the tag because I got - I was  
11 trying to have a tag before 2006, before the law  
12 is coming. So I try to get a tag but the DCTC  
13 closed three times.

14 So because of that, after I pass one  
15 exam, and then waiting for the computer exam,  
16 DCTC shut down his program. So because of that,  
17 when they open, the time is changed and they  
18 changed the new rule. So I believe I start  
19 paying, and attend the class before the law, and  
20 I pay the money before the law.

21 So the DCTC's problem is they closed  
22 before telling us. When they opened, they change

1 the rules, so we stuck. So why we get, slave for  
2 this company without even our willing, and just  
3 because of we don't have a tag. So it is very  
4 important to give - at the same time, also I  
5 don't have any problem to give any tag for  
6 everybody. But we should have a limit. It is  
7 ludicrous to say, when Uber flooded the city, to  
8 say not to give to our brother another tag, it is  
9 very sad for me. The Uber is flooding the city.  
10 But I believe those people, they were designed,  
11 the signature, not to ask a tag before they get  
12 the license. I think they already put themself  
13 on that. So I think that's the reason they don't  
14 get.

15 But in my case, I don't have any  
16 problem to give everybody, but when the Uber come  
17 and flood the city, still, they are our brother  
18 and sister. Otherwise, they should have a limit,  
19 some kind of limit for the city. Thank you very  
20 much, sir.

21 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you,  
22 sir. I appreciate it, and that was our last

1 guest, Chairman.

2 CHAIRMAN TAPSCOTT: This meeting is  
3 adjourned at 1:30 -- 1:40. Thank you very much,  
4 everyone attending today, and we will be looking  
5 at this, the whole panel, and there will be a  
6 decision later.

7 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
8 went off the record at 1:45 p.m.)

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## A

- A-b-a-d** 39:7  
**A-b-a-d-i-g-a** 9:3  
**A-b-a-m-e-c-h-u** 9:7  
 39:10  
**A-b-d-e-l** 89:3,19  
**A-b-d-e-l-m** 20:22  
**A-b-d-u-l** 77:1  
 91:12  
**A-b-e** 69:22  
**A-b-e-b-e** 24:14  
 39:20 70:1  
**A-d-e-b** 9:12  
**A-d-e-b-o-y-k-u**  
 39:13  
**A-d-e-r-o-j-u** 9:18  
**A-f-z-a-l** 69:19  
**a-i-l-e-s** 9:9  
**A-k** 39:13  
**A-k-i-n-k** 25:7  
**A-k-i-n-k-u-g-b-e**  
 22:13  
**A-k-i-n-t** 47:22  
**a-k-o-u-p** 19:6  
**A-k-u-m** 9:13  
**A-l-e-m-a-y-e-h-u**  
 8:17 78:22  
**A-l-i** 70:12  
**A-n-d-a-r-g-a-c-h-...**  
 8:19  
**A-r-i-y-i-b-i** 70:6  
 77:1  
**A-y-a-n-e** 70:2,3  
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