

In Re NYC - Taxi & Limousine Commission, Public Hearing
October 10, 2024

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NEW YORK CITY
TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING

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October 10, 2024
10:17 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING
Held
Virtually Via Zoom

B E F O R E :

DAVID DO
COMMISSIONER AND CHAIR

Stephanie O'Keefe
Court Reporter

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A P P E A R A N C E S :

TLC COMMISSIONERS:

COMMISSIONER DAVID DO

COMMISSIONER PAUL BADER

COMMISSIONER THOMAS SORRENTINO

COMMISSIONER KENNETH C. MITCHELL

COMMISSIONER KENNETH Y.K. CHAN

GENERAL COUNSEL SHERRYL ELUTO

1 MODERATOR: The meeting is about to begin.
2 This hearing is being conducted remotely via
3 Zoom and is being simulcasted to the TLC's
4 website live stream and Facebook accounts.

5 All persons wishing to testify were asked
6 to sign up in advance of the hearing. All
7 registered speakers are joining the meeting via
8 Zoom. If you are speaking today, your audio
9 and video will automatically be muted. When
10 your name is called, the moderator will
11 activate your account, and you will have
12 control of your camera and microphone. When
13 ready, please state your name and affiliation
14 and then proceed with your testimony.

15 Public testimony will be limited to three
16 minutes per speaker. Any additional comments
17 may be submitted in writing to the Commission.

18 When your testimony is complete, your
19 audio and video will be muted by the moderator.

20 A special note for our registered
21 speakers. Please make sure that your display
22 name in the Zoom meeting matches the name that
23 you used when you signed up to speak. This
24 will enable the moderator to confirm that you
25 are present in the meeting. Closed captioning

1 is available for today's meeting, consecutive
2 interpretation is also available. During the
3 sign-up process, individuals were asked if they
4 required language assistance, a Spanish
5 interpreter has been made available. If you
6 are using an interpreter, when your name is
7 called, please speak, and the interpreter will
8 repeat your testimony in English. Thank you
9 for your attention, please hold until we are
10 ready to begin. We will repeat this message in
11 Spanish.

12 (Spanish interpreter speaks.)

13 MODERATOR: Thank you, Spanish
14 Interpreter.

15 I will now yield the floor to our Chair,
16 Commissioner Do.

17 CHAIR DO: Good morning, everyone. The
18 time is 10:17, and I call this public hearing
19 to order.

20 Today's rule package is on the proposed
21 rule requiring that all taxicab vehicles hacked
22 up, be a wheelchair accessible vehicle in order
23 to comply with the Federal court order
24 requiring that fifty percent of the City's
25 taxicabs be attached to a wheelchair accessible

1 taxicab.

2 I am Commissioner David Do, and I'm joined
3 here today by Commissioners Bader, Chan, and
4 Mitchell.

5 Before we begin, I'd like to talk briefly
6 about the Agency's commitment to accessibility.
7 Accessibility is a core part of our mission.
8 People using wheelchairs have the same rights
9 to transportation options as everyone else. We
10 have made significant progress in building up
11 an accessible fleet over the years, especially
12 when it comes to accessible FHV's. New York
13 City now has the most accessible for-hire fleet
14 in the nation. We have nearly 8,000 accessible
15 FHV's, and ninety percent of the time, the
16 average wait time for the WAV is ten minutes or
17 less.

18 We have also been working to achieve the
19 goal of fifty percent accessible taxi fleet as
20 part of the Taxis For All Campaign legal
21 settlement, while at the same time recognizing
22 that the medallion industry is in a fragile
23 recovery.

24 Forty-two percent of our active taxis are
25 currently wheelchair accessible, and Federal

1 Judge Daniels has ordered us to take immediate
2 steps to satisfy the terms of the original
3 settlement. TLC is proposing today's rule
4 package in order to implement that order.
5 Specifically, the order mandates that the TLC
6 immediately take all necessary steps to modify
7 TLC's current fifty-percent rule to implement a
8 one hundred percent rule to ensure that fifty
9 percent of all active medallions are being
10 operated with the WAV by March 31, 2025, fifty
11 percent of all authorized medallions are
12 attached to a wheelchair accessible vehicle by
13 the end of 2028.

14 Today's proposed rules requires that all
15 taxi hack-ups must be wheelchair accessible,
16 repeal the language in our rules that establish
17 a lottery system for the conversion of the
18 fleet, permits he-hacks for WAVs only, and we
19 are also proposing to remove the vehicle
20 retirement hardship exemption that kept taxis
21 on the road for additional years beyond their
22 scheduled retirement. Earlier this year, we
23 adopted a rule allowing a WAVs to stay on the
24 road so long as they pass inspection.

25 I will now hand it over to our general

1 counsel, Sherry Eluto for the public hearing.

2 Sherryl.

3 MS. ELUTO: Good morning. When I call
4 your name, you can unmute your microphone and
5 begin your testimony. Each speaker will be
6 allotted three minutes to speak. The time
7 limit will be strictly enforced. A
8 thirty-second warning will be provided and then
9 you will need to conclude your testimony when
10 your time limit is up.

11 Today's rule proposal was published in the
12 City Record and posted on our website September
13 10th. The public comment period ends today.

14 The video of this hearing and copies of
15 all written comments will be provided to the
16 commissioners prior to the vote on these rules
17 at the next commission meeting.

18 With that, we will begin our public
19 hearing, I will call on our first speaker. Our
20 first speaker is Michael Simon. Is he -- I'm
21 not seeing him on the screen. I will go to
22 Lloyd Dinma. Lloyd Dinma, you can unmute your
23 microphone and you can begin. Is there any
24 reason that this isn't moving along because I
25 can see -- Mr. Dinma, if you can unmute your

1 microphone.

2 MR. DINMA: Can you hear me now?

3 MS. ELUTO: Yes.

4 MR. DINMA: Mr. Commissioner, my fellow
5 TLC drivers, member of the general public, I
6 salute you all.

7 I am responding to the proposed rule
8 requirement, all subsequent vehicles, be it
9 hacked-up or WAVs. I am also commenting on the
10 recent court ruling that has triggered this
11 proposal. I oppose. I'll explain why.

12 On September 11, I responded to a dispatch
13 trip on 26th and Ninth Avenue in Manhattan.
14 There was construction going on in the
15 vicinity, and it didn't help that the road was
16 narrow. However, I quickly spotted my
17 passenger and stopped and responded to assist
18 her into my vehicle. She appeared to be petite
19 (unintelligible) hunchback and also, she was
20 very slow in motion.

21 After I guided her into my vehicle, I
22 quickly proceeded to put her walker into my
23 trunk, got into my vehicle and tried to move.
24 Then I saw a traffic cop standing next to my
25 windshield with his gadget. He callously

1 informed me that I would get a ticket in the
2 mail. Upset, I protested, this is a physically
3 challenged passenger. He responded, it did not
4 matter and walked away. He also did not
5 present me with the summons, as was required.

6 As is often, I went through a bit of a
7 ringer trying to get documents proving my trip
8 as a WAV for my traffic hearing. I did have
9 the \$150 ticket dismissed (unintelligible)
10 disrupted more than a whole day's pay on the
11 road. My (unintelligible) with it was not
12 working, went back and forth between her
13 mobility and (unintelligible) dispatch was
14 rectified. Fortunately, the ticket got
15 dismissed as there were discrepancies in the
16 incident location inputted by the traffic cop
17 and proof that it was dispatch trip.

18 My testimony is wholly in aggravation.
19 Many of my fellow drivers have similar ones;
20 however, many are not fortunate to have
21 resources to fight the ticket.

22 Clearly the policies and infrastructure
23 recognizes an internal way to overhead incurred
24 by the TLC WAV drivers in performing this
25 crucial service to the public has not been put

1 in place.

2 In lieu of this draconian proposal, I
3 offer another suggestion. The TLC can explore
4 the option of optimizing the deployment of
5 current WAV vehicles in service. It feels like
6 just about three out of every five yellow cabs
7 you see while driving are phone connects, they
8 seem to be everywhere. I know many drivers, in
9 particular TLC drivers (unintelligible)
10 circumstances who do not respond to dispatch
11 trips. Many taxi bases have (unintelligible)
12 on missing WAV accessories, like floor hack-ups
13 in their vehicles. This is the core of the
14 problem, in my opinion. I think the TLC should
15 follow through like the FHV's, like Uber and
16 Lyft by --

17 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

18 MR. DINMA: -- and conducting random
19 inspections of vehicles and fine these bases.

20 In the meantime, I think this proposal
21 should somehow be sidelined. It is much closer
22 to the precocious settlement I would have
23 preferred.

24 I thank you all very much for your
25 time. Have a nice day.

1 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker up is Max Greenbaum.
3 Mr. Greenbaum, you can unmute your mic and
4 begin.

5 MR. GREENBAUM: Good morning. I want to
6 thank the commissioners for their time and for
7 listening to my concerns. I have submitted
8 detailed written comments as well.

9 My name is Max Greenbaum. I am the vice
10 president of All Taxi Management, a taxicab
11 agent licensed by the TLC since 1988.

12 All Taxi is proud to be an early adopter
13 of the driver-owned vehicle leasing model, also
14 known as DOVE. This model gives the medallion
15 drivers the opportunity to purchase and own
16 their own vehicle throughout their medallion
17 lease. Dove drivers maintain their own
18 vehicles and can even sublease the vehicle to
19 other drivers in an entrepreneurial spirit. It
20 is often referred to as a steppingstone to
21 becoming a medallion owner.

22 There are a number of proposed rules and
23 provisions by the TLC that do not support and
24 will actually harm or destroy the DOVE model.
25 Our primary concern is in regard to re-hacks,

1 especially as it relates to DOVE or, at least
2 to owned vehicles and agents. The proposed
3 rules, as drafted, require that when a
4 medallion with a non-WAV vehicle is taken out
5 of operation for any reason, such as the
6 medallion owner passing away, sale of a
7 medallion, or foreclosure, the existing
8 vehicle, which was already approved the TLC,
9 would have to be replaced by a wheelchair
10 accessible vehicle.

11 Essentially, this renders the existing
12 vehicle worthless as a taxicab even if it's a
13 brand-new vehicle, which was already hacked up
14 and approved under the existing TLC rules. To
15 be clear, I am not advocating for any new
16 non-wheelchairs to enter the market for
17 additional vehicle extensions until compliance
18 is met with the Federal court case; I am simply
19 requesting that the vehicles that have already
20 been approved and are already operating under
21 the TLC rules be allowed to be re-hacked in
22 limited circumstances. Any other new or used
23 vehicles that are not currently hacked up as a
24 New York City medallion will need to be
25 wheelchair.

1 This not only affects the DOVE
2 lease-to-own model but also the majority of
3 agents who manage third-party medallions. The
4 TLC has a rule that requires the agent to
5 accept sixty days' notice should a medallion
6 owner wish to take back their medallion under
7 the proposed rules.

8 There is currently -- if there is
9 currently a non-WAV vehicle on the medallion,
10 the existing vehicle will be worthless as a
11 taxicab. The DOVE driver will lose their
12 equity in the vehicle, the same way an agent
13 will lose their investment in this industry.

14 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

15 MR. GREENBAUM: Just imagine if you invest
16 a great deal of money in a vehicle and the
17 medallion for this vehicle is put into storage
18 for reasons beyond the agent or driver's
19 control, suddenly your investment is worthless.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker, Justin
22 Fernandez. Mr. Fernandez, go ahead, unmute.
23 Mr. Fernandez, you need to unmute your
24 microphone.

25 MR. FERNANDEZ: Can you hear me?

1 MS. ELUTO: Yes. Yes, go ahead.

2 MR. FERNANDEZ: Good morning.

3 MS. ELUTO: Good morning.

4 MR. FERNANDEZ: My name is Justin
5 Fernandez. I belong to the New York Taxi
6 Workers Alliance.

7 Please give us owner/drivers extension
8 when our taxi expires after seven years, some
9 of us drive by ourselves and keep the taxi in
10 very good condition. This extension will help
11 us to collect money to buy the new taxi. Every
12 little bit helps in the long run.

13 In addition, please give us the necessary
14 help, monetary-wise, when have to purchase the
15 WAV taxi, also the monthly expenses to repair
16 the WAV taxi and keep it running on the road.

17 Also, what about the app companies, Uber,
18 Lyft, et cetera, they should be fifty percent
19 WAV too. Why only medallion taxi?

20 Thank you very much to give me a chance to
21 speak.

22 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker, Richard Chow. Mr. Chow,
24 please unmute your mic and begin. Mr. Chow,
25 can you please unmute your microphone.

1 MR. CHOW: It's my turn now.

2 MS. ELUTO: Yes, go ahead.

3 MR. CHOW: Hello, can you hear me?

4 MS. ELUTO: Yes.

5 MR. CHOW: Hello, good morning. My name
6 is Richard Chow. I'm an owner/driver. I'm a
7 member of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.
8 I'm driving taxi eighteen years. Owner/driver,
9 this is -- trips are down 15 percent, more
10 before COVID-19 lockdown. Owner/driver no make
11 money to buy the WAV medallion. Revenue is
12 down, only ninety thousand. WAV Sienna cost
13 90,000. Owner/driver no make money, cannot
14 make -- invest 90,000, buy the new WAV and able
15 to stay this risky business and may lose the
16 job, owner/driver financial hardship forcing
17 the bankruptcy.

18 About 250 owner/driver still waiting to
19 see the MIB program. This owner very risky and
20 tired of waiting for MIB program. This owner
21 paying to the bank only the interest rate, 500
22 a week, \$2,000 apartment, insurance 364 per
23 month, the girls -- the kids' tuition, the
24 household bills, driver -- difficult time the
25 paying the bills. Drivers are work fourteen,

1 fifteen hours on the street, looking for fare.
2 Sometimes one and a half hour, cannot get a
3 single fare.

4 TLC should make an extension at least one
5 to two years, the WAV to the -- WAV should
6 remain fifty percent, not a hundred percent.
7 We do not agree hundred percent. Federal law
8 is a fifty percent WAV, TLC should give more
9 money, more firm from the Federal government to
10 pay cost of the 50 percent of the WAV, about
11 \$45,000 grant to the driver so -- who can buy
12 the WAV cab?

13 So TLC also make the day -- I don't see --
14 I driving every day, I don't see any WAVs
15 hailing on the street. The WAV -- handicap
16 people only calling from the app, they're
17 booking from the app, they're not hailing from
18 the street.

19 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

20 MR. CHOW: We are wasting money installing
21 the WAV, wasting, burning the gas, this is
22 wasting a lot of money, so we should be, you
23 know, given, you know, TLC should be given the
24 data, so we didn't need that much hailing on
25 the street.

1 Thank you for listening, and we need help.

2 God bless everyone. Thank you.

3 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker, Vinod Malhatra
5 (phonetic). Mr. Malhatra, please unmute your
6 mic and begin.

7 MR. MALHATRA: Hello, hi, good morning.
8 Do you hear me?

9 MS. ELUTO: Yes, good morning.

10 MR. MALHATRA: Good morning, all
11 commissioners. My name is Vinod Malhatra.

12 So I am requesting, sir, ending the
13 extension for retiring vehicles, it will be
14 hard life in the industry.

15 As you know, Honorable Judge just ordered
16 that all vehicle will be WAVs until they reach
17 the fifty perecent goal, when to apply this
18 rule. There will be vehicle shortage, I
19 believe.

20 And secondly, there are still so many
21 owner/operators now that have to restructure
22 their loans. They're still paying around
23 average twenty-five; three thousand per month.
24 So please extend the down payment to help the
25 owner/operators to buy the new wheelchair

1 vehicle, at least 25,000 so -- because their
2 car prices is already over \$80,000.

3 So I request the Honorable Judge, Mr.
4 Daniels, please reconsider your order to must
5 meet the fifty percent wheelchair vehicles,
6 this will lead to more expense for the TLC and
7 owner/operators. Already 3,500 yellow and
8 6,000 FHV are already invested in their
9 vehicles.

10 So, sir, I have two vehicles, one my
11 driver, one my brother drives. So no one have
12 fare at least last two months, so why FSV cars
13 average have two fares per week, so this
14 attorney should ask you make available vehicles
15 as demand of the wheelchair percentages. This
16 will make easy for everyone.

17 Thanks so much. So thank you for giving
18 time. Thank you.

19 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Bhairavi Desai. Ms.
21 Desai, you can unmute your mic and speak. Ms.
22 Desai, can you please unmute your mic. There
23 you go.

24 MS. DESAI: Hello, this is Bhairavi Desai
25 with the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

1 I'm sorry, is there a reason that my video
2 is not on?

3 MODERATOR: This is the moderator, I did
4 try to promote you to the panelists, but it
5 said you declined. Let me -- I can try again
6 to promote you to panelist, but if it doesn't
7 work, we should just continue on with your
8 testimony.

9 CHAIR DO: Did it work?

10 MODERATOR: Yes, it did say she will be
11 rejoining as a panelist.

12 CHAIR DO: Great.

13 MODERATOR: You should be able to turn it
14 on now?

15 MS. ELUTO: Does she have to go out and
16 come back?

17 CHAIR DO: If not, you might have to come
18 out and --

19 MS. DESAI: Can you hear me now.

20 CHAIR DO: We can hear you, but if you
21 want your video to be turned on, I think just
22 turn off Zoom and log back in.

23 MS. DESAI: Okay, it's giving me a
24 message. How about now?

25 MODERATOR: There we go.

1 MS. DESAI: But I don't know why the
2 background is TLC background or some basic
3 background.

4 I'm sorry. You know, you're not allowing
5 us to speak in person, so I think at least we
6 should be able to have our own visual here.

7 CHAIR DO: Can we turn off her background?

8 MODERATOR: Just for the record, the TLC
9 logo is not showing behind you, it is a gray
10 background, but it's not the TLC logo.

11 MS. DESAI: Yes, I see it's not the
12 background, but it doesn't show the background
13 of where I am actually standing.

14 CHAIR DO: The IT team will try to fix
15 that, if they can't, we're just gonna have to
16 proceed, B.

17 MODERATOR: We can come back to you later.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIR DO: Do you want us to come back in
20 a little bit, Bhairavi?

21 MS. DESAI: I can speak now, I would
22 like -- there's gonna be other speakers that
23 follow me from TWA, and I do hope that you're
24 able the fix that. You know, I wouldn't make
25 an issue out of this, except we're not there in

1 person, so at least we want you to see
2 everything, you know.

3 There is a group of us standing here at
4 the corner of Broadway and Murray because we're
5 not able to come in person and testify. This
6 is a really critical hearing. TLC cannot
7 eliminate the hardship extensions that
8 medallion owners desperately need. Wheelchair
9 accessible vehicles cost as much as 80 to even
10 \$90,000, and the extra two to three years that
11 you can get for an extension is absolutely
12 critical to allow you to save up enough money
13 to be able to invest into and buy that vehicle.
14 Without these extensions -- and these are based
15 on hardships, you know, these are not frivolous
16 applications, these are based on hardships. I
17 have seen hardship applications through the
18 years where people have given you bank
19 statements that show that they have zero
20 dollars in their bank accounts, they will show
21 you Con Edison bills because they're in
22 arrears, they can't even pay for their
23 electricity. They'll show that their kids have
24 had to drop out of college because they cannot
25 keep up with their expenses. They have had to

1 stop tutoring for their young children because
2 they cannot keep up with their expenses. Maybe
3 what they're not showing you are the grocery
4 bills because of how much people even end up
5 cutting back on groceries because they cannot
6 keep up with these expenses. Hardship
7 applications are absolutely necessary, they
8 tell the story of what has happened in the
9 industry.

10 Ten years ago when the TLC entered into
11 this settlement, yellow cabs did about close to
12 500,000 trips every single day. Since then,
13 you have had the entrance of Uber and Lyft
14 without regulation. At the same time, you had,
15 have had the impact of COVID. The yellow cab
16 industry has had the slowest post-COVID
17 recovery. Today we're talking about less than
18 a hundred thousand trips every single day. And
19 the trips are necessary, not only for drivers
20 to survive, but the revenue from the trips, the
21 surcharge for the Taxicab Improvement Fund is
22 what's been used to even subsidize, you know,
23 these vehicles.

24 We need the TLC to help us get grants from
25 the City, the State, or the Federal Government

1 because the \$14,000 grants that are available
2 today, they have never been even adjusted for
3 inflation. They're simply not enough. We need
4 more support.

5 On top of that, we need you to keep the
6 vehicle -- the hardship applications, and we
7 need you to understand that there's hundreds of
8 owner/drivers who --

9 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

10 MS. DESAI: -- have yet to see their debt
11 forgiven. You cannot allow them to face 2,500
12 --\$3,000 in monthly mortgage and then have to
13 pay \$25,000 down for a new car overnight, and
14 have to pay even up to like \$2,000 in a monthly
15 mortgage for that vehicle for the next three
16 years. We need a timeline that is sustainable,
17 that is not going to crush our members, we
18 believe in the accessibility mandate, but it
19 cannot come --

20 MODERATOR: Time has expired.

21 MS. DESAI: -- expense of the drivers.
22 Maintain these applications for hardship.
23 Driver power.

24 CHAIR DO: Thank you. Bhairavi, I
25 appreciate your comments.

1 MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker is Peter
2 Mazer. Mr. Mazer, go ahead.

3 MR. MAZER: Good morning, Chairman Do and
4 members of the Commission. My name is Peter
5 Mazer, and I'm general counsel to the
6 Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade. We have
7 advocated for taxicab owners and operators for
8 more than seventy years. In addition to this
9 comment, we have submitted written submissions,
10 which we ask be made part of the record and
11 read by Commissioners before a final vote is
12 taken.

13 We fully understand the implications of
14 Judge Daniels' ruling in the thirteen-year-old
15 disability lawsuit, but his decision must be
16 considered in light of the current financial
17 hardship faced by medallion owners. You can
18 order owners to place accessible vehicles
19 costing upwards of \$80,000, but unless you
20 address their legitimate financial hardships,
21 you will force even more cabs into storage.
22 Already there are 4,200 cabs out of service. I
23 don't think you want even more cabs idle
24 because owners simply cannot comply with this
25 mandate.

1 Today I would like you to address two
2 issues. First, you are considering repealing a
3 rule that permits vehicle retirement extensions
4 for eligible owners. Second, you are not
5 addressing the need to fully fund the TIF
6 Program, which finances accessible vehicle
7 purchases, conversions, and operations. If you
8 simply adopt a repeal of the extension rules
9 without further changes, you may find that the
10 number of accessible taxicabs in service, now
11 at forty-two percent, will decline even
12 further. But a few simple changes can reverse
13 this trend.

14 This past summer, you approved rules
15 permitting the conversion of non-accessible
16 vehicles, retrofitters willing to do this work
17 identified, but this process takes time. We
18 urge you to keep the door open for
19 non-accessible vehicles. We expect that
20 hundreds of accessible vehicles can be
21 retrofitted in the upcoming months, if this
22 opportunity is afforded to them.

23 Second, owners need more resources to
24 purchase, retrofit, and operate accessible
25 vehicles. There were rule-making proposals to

1 increase TIP payments, while these are not
2 before you today, the need to fully fund the
3 purchase, conversion, and operation of
4 accessible vehicles is essential.

5 We urge expeditious action in this regard.
6 Time is of the essence.

7 As Judge Daniels stated recently when
8 addressing this issue, "You adjust what you
9 have been doing to meet the obligations, or at
10 least show that you're doing everything you can
11 practically to meet the obligations that you
12 have embodied in this settlement."

13 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

14 MR. MAZER: Thank you.

15 Working together, we can get to the level
16 of accessible service envisioned by this court
17 and agreed to in this litigation. Addressing
18 the concerns I have raised today will help you
19 get to that goal.

20 I want to thank you again for opportunity
21 to speak today and I'll be happy to answer any
22 questions that, if commissioners may have.

23 Thank you.

24 MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker, Dorothy
25 Locont (phonetic). Dorothy, you can unmute

1 your mic and begin.

2 MS. LOCONT: Yes, good morning. Thank you
3 for giving me the time to speak. My name is
4 Dorothy Locont. I've been an operation -- an
5 owner/operator since, well, this next year,
6 three months, I'll be thirty-eight years in the
7 business.

8 What happened is, like you know, everybody
9 else, we have been hit by the app company, and
10 it's not even Uber. We have thousands of apps
11 in the street, illegal apps, we cannot even
12 pick up a job in front of the hotel, Randomly,
13 we have to pick up a shorty, everybody with a
14 phone, looking for app to pick them up. So we
15 drove in the City one hour fifteen minutes --

16 MS. ELUTO: I'm sorry. Do you have any
17 comment on the actual rule proposal?

18 MS. LOCONT: Correct. I'm coming to that.

19 MS. ELUTO: Okay.

20 MS. LOCONT: So we cannot make money.
21 Actually, my loan is not even restructured yet,
22 so my hardship, it is so hard I barely make
23 ends meet, I barely pay my bills, so I don't
24 have enough money to go in right now, if you
25 close that -- if you close that extension, I

1 just got a second extension, and I need to put
2 money together to buy another vehicle by
3 October 2025. It's kind of pressed on me, and
4 I believe it's not on me, it's a lot of other
5 drivers. So I would appreciate if TLC go back
6 and reconstructed whatever the problem it is in
7 vehicles to help the owner/drivers because I
8 really cannot take it. You're driving me out
9 of business completely.

10 My age, I can't even find another job, and
11 I have no money in my retirement, I lost
12 everything. So I will need to go out there to
13 work daily to make my daily bread, so another
14 bill on top of medallion's bill, I don't think
15 I'm gonna be able to do it. I, looking at
16 myself by October next year, I'll be out of
17 business. I believe that they're pushing
18 people to be out the business. I don't think
19 its fair.

20 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

21 MS. LOCONT: I don't think it's fair, we
22 have -- Taxi Limousine has to go back to court
23 and discuss that with Judge Daniels and see all
24 you put more money and give us money in front
25 to put in the car payment as a deposit.

1 \$14,000 is not enough, it's not enough at all.
2 So really, I need you to have this in
3 consideration to help the driver and the
4 owners.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Wain Chin. Mr. Chin,
8 go ahead and unmute your microphone.

9 MR. CHIN: Good morning. My name is Wain
10 Chin, I'm owner/driver, and also member of New
11 York Taxi Workers Alliance.

12 As a medallion owner, we have to pay the
13 mortgage for your medallion. My loan is not
14 restructured yet, and my bank haven't joined
15 the MFP Program, so we waiting for the
16 settlement while my union try to get the
17 financing for my settlement. I cannot afford
18 to buy a loan or make a commitment to buy a new
19 car.

20 I had to change the new car this month, I
21 cannot change it yet because my medallion loan
22 (unintelligible) and I stay paying 2,000 a
23 month for my loan, only interest only. I had
24 to buy another new car, I had to pay like 1,400
25 a month and two -- one high mortgage and one

1 expensive loan, I cannot afford it, so I ask
2 the extension until our loan -- the loan
3 restructure by the City or the new bank.

4 And, you know, also we are struggling to
5 make money on the street because of the City
6 policy adding more license plates on the
7 for-hire vehicle on the street. Everybody's
8 struggling to find work on the street. FHV,
9 yellow cab, everybody is struggling because of
10 the City plate policy, adding more plate, more
11 plate, more plate on the street. We don't have
12 enough work to pay for all these expenses. You
13 have to wake up, City has to wake up, okay. no
14 more driver suicide. The City has to wake up,
15 we cannot pay for all those expenses unless you
16 increase your funding for the WAV. You know,
17 2018, the medallion, Sienna cost \$50,000, 2024
18 Sienna cost \$90,000. \$40,000 is a lot, 30,000
19 (unintelligible), otherwise we cannot survive.

20 We support the ADA rule because my father,
21 my late father, he disabled person, he need
22 wheelchair to get around, I understand that,
23 but for the same time, the City has to support
24 the driver, owner/driver to pay for all the
25 expenses. Also your policy, putting more

1 plates on the street, we cannot survive, we
2 have to struggle finding jobs on the street.

3 MODERATOR: Thirty-seconds remaining.

4 MR. CHIN: So we need more funding.

5 Driver power. Driver power. Driver power.

6 MS. ELUTO: Great. Our next speaker today
7 is Kathleen Collins. Ms. Collins, if you can
8 unmute your mic. Yes, go ahead.

9 MS. COLLINS: Good morning, my name is
10 Kathleen Collins. I'm a native New Yorker who
11 is a congenital quadruple amputee, who uses a
12 wheelchair and has lived in New York City for
13 more than 60 years. I am on the board of
14 Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York,
15 also known as DIA.

16 Today I am testifying on behalf of DIA and
17 the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the
18 Disabled, both of whom support the proposal to
19 amend the Taxi and Limousine Commission's rules
20 to require that all taxicab vehicles hacked-up
21 must be accessible vehicles. This will bring
22 the TLC in compliance with the Federal court
23 order requiring that fifty percent of the
24 City's taxicab fleet be attached to a
25 wheelchair accessible taxicab.

1 We recognize that the cost of wheelchair
2 accessible taxis has gone up significantly in
3 recent years, and we again call on the TLC and
4 the City to provide additional funding for
5 drivers who are buying accessible vehicles.
6 The current Taxi Improvement surcharge will not
7 cover those costs, so it is incumbent on the
8 City to designate other funding immediately to
9 make the transition seamless for drivers.

10 At the same time, no one should use
11 vehicle costs as an excuse to deny access to
12 our community. New Yorkers with disabilities
13 go everywhere and do everything, and we deserve
14 full access to the City's taxi system.

15 In fact, our two organizations urge the
16 New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission to
17 go even further. It's time to require that all
18 taxicabs in service be wheelchair accessible
19 vehicles. Until we have a hundred percent
20 access to all New York City's yellow cabs, that
21 way everyone who needs one would be guaranteed
22 to get a wheelchair accessible taxi, allowing
23 all New Yorkers to travel throughout the five
24 boroughs in New York City with ease, and
25 visitors, too.

1 Thank you for the opportunity to submit
2 this testimony.

3 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker today is Kafil Uddin.
5 Mr. Uddin, if you can unmute your microphone
6 and begin.

7 MR. UDDIN: Good morning, commissioners.
8 My name is Kafil Uddin. I own a medallion and
9 a 2024 Rav 4, which is almost one year old.

10 In this unexpected work, I paid nearly as
11 much for my car as my medallion. These are the
12 two biggest purchases of my life. I have paid
13 one year on my car and have two years
14 remaining.

15 Under the proposed rules, I understand
16 that if I should have a emergency or illness in
17 my life, and I was forced to park my car for
18 any extended period, I will need to continue to
19 pay my liability insurance to keep my car.
20 Should I surrender my plate and put my
21 medallion in storage, I will not be able to use
22 my existing car, loan balance and all, even
23 again.

24 I need the TLC protection in my car
25 investment so that, should I fall ill, I'm not

1 forfeiting my future. I ask that the new rules
2 allow for me continuation of an existing
3 vehicle until its expiration date.

4 Thank you for allowing me to share my
5 concern.

6 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Gee Zhoujie. Mr.
8 Zhoujie, you can unmute your microphone and
9 begin.

10 MR. ZHOUIE: I Gee Zhoujie, I am an Uber
11 driver, so I'm not too much the question, just
12 for my -- last time I have said -- have some
13 tickets for me for the TLC, so I don't know --
14 I'm very confused for the ticket, I'm a driver
15 TLC, maybe seven or eight year, seven or eight
16 years, so I'm also am the good driver,
17 sometimes the customer have --

18 MS. ELUTO: Sir, I'm going to have
19 somebody reach out to you later today about
20 your ticket.

21 MR. ZHOUIE: Yeah, I don't know what to.
22 Okay.

23 MS. ELUTO: You're not testifying about
24 the rule, right.

25 MR. ZHOUIE: Okay, I just listen, thank

1 you.

2 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Allison Langley.

4 MS. LANGLEY: Can you see me?

5 MS. ELUTO: No, I can hear you, but I
6 can't see you.

7 MS. LANGLEY: Well, I'm standing with a
8 crowd of members at Broadway and Murray, so if
9 there is a way to get my video on.

10 CHAIR DO: One second. What happened with
11 this one, moderator?

12 MODERATOR: Let me promote her to a
13 panelist. Hold on one moment.

14 CHAIR DO: There you go.

15 MS. LANGLEY: Is there a way to turn that
16 background off, I know it happened for other
17 presenters. You can sort of see I have a lot
18 of members here who come in spotily.

19 CHAIR DO: We have been trying with the IT
20 team, we haven't been successful, so please.

21 MS. LANGLEY: I thought it was off for
22 Mr. Mazer, so I'm just curious why it's not off
23 for us.

24 Okay, so I'll start my testimony, but I
25 think it's important that the commissioners

1 know there is a group of drivers here at
2 Broadway and Murray, not all of whom were able
3 to sign up to testify, all of whom are relying
4 on the TLC not moving ahead with their
5 arbitrary and irrational decision to repeal
6 Section 6719, which allows drivers who are
7 facing economic or personal hardship to receive
8 an extension on their vehicle retirement date.

9 NYTWA supports the overall goal of
10 accessibility in the taxi fleet, as you heard
11 so compelling from our member, Wain Chin, just
12 moments ago. And while we oppose the one
13 hundred percent WAV rule because of the
14 significant economic harm it will cause to
15 owner/drivers, we understand there's little the
16 TLC can do now because of the court order.

17 However, there is simply no rational
18 reason for the TLC to double-down and worsen
19 the economic pain and poverty this rule change
20 will cause by removing its own ability to grant
21 drivers who are facing personal and economic
22 hardship an extension.

23 The court did not order this. In fact,
24 the TLC has produced zero evidence that
25 removing the hardship extension will allow them

1 to reach fifty percent WAVs in the taxicab
2 fleet at a faster rate. They did not --
3 throughout the course of litigation, they did
4 not explicitly include an analysis of vehicle
5 retirement exceptions or the impact of drivers
6 being forced out of the industry when they are
7 denied extensions. They did not produce that
8 data in the proposed rule package today either.

9 There is simply no evidence that forcing
10 drivers out of the industry, which is what
11 removing extension requests will do, will put
12 more WAVs on the road.

13 What we do know, however, is that a WAV
14 doubles the purchase price of a new vehicle
15 from 40 to 80,000. It also increases daily
16 operational costs and maintenance costs.

17 As you have heard from other speakers
18 today, TIF benefits are currently insufficient
19 to cover these increased costs. The hack-up
20 grant covers only eighteen percent of the
21 purchase price and the quarterly maintenance
22 rates have not been increased to reflect
23 historic levels of inflation, even as
24 transportation costs have increased
25 thirty-three percent between 2020 to 2023

1 alone.

2 What's worse, a simple analysis of the TIF
3 fund shows that it could not sustain benefits
4 at current trip levels, even before the
5 mandated change to a hundred percent WAVs, so
6 that's before -- that's half the level that
7 it's gonna have to be now, it was only gonna
8 remain solvent for another couple of years
9 because TIF is funded through a surcharge on
10 trips, and trips are down. So trips are down,
11 that means drivers are making less money and
12 TIF is not solvent, they're not providing
13 enough benefits to drivers.

14 Instead of pushing the cost of the WAV
15 conversion onto drivers, while also taking away
16 the only way that drivers have to get a little
17 bit of breathing room --

18 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

19 MS. LANGLEY: -- before they ultimately
20 make the transition to WAV, the TLC must focus
21 on finding alternate funding sources to cover
22 the true purchase and operational costs of
23 operating an accessible fleet.

24 That is how we make an accessible
25 transportation system, by funding it, not by

1 pushing drivers further into poverty because
2 the City has repeatedly broken the promises it
3 made to disabled New Yorkers.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker, Manjindere
6 Singh. Mr. Singh, you can unmute your
7 microphone and you can begin. Mr. Singh, yes,
8 go ahead.

9 MR. SINGH: Good morning to Commissioner
10 Do and the other commissioners.

11 I think 14,000 is very low to, like,
12 maintain the 90,000 price of the vehicle and
13 when they start this new -- and they never
14 changed this one. I am very, like, you know,
15 upset about this thing, you guys making that
16 rule in only the favor of you. You need more
17 accessible vehicle chair, handicap vehicle
18 wheelchair, and you think, like, no one need
19 extension or anything. You think it's not
20 unfair for us.

21 And other thing is, how many fare we get
22 with the handicap wheelchair, if we get it, and
23 this is no guarantee the pay, it because people
24 is very -- I cannot say how they are but their
25 credit card doesn't work. It happened to me in

1 the two year, and I never paid. This year we
2 paid the \$15, we no care about -- cannot take
3 the responsibility of your meter fare.

4 And plus, how many wheelchair job we get
5 in -- I have this wheelchair last five months,
6 and I got only one wheelchair job and they sent
7 me to Bronx from Manhattan.

8 Then, it's -- can you, TLC, give us the
9 guarantee at least five or six job daily with
10 the wheelchair vehicle and the guarantee to pay
11 the meter fare? Can we do, to make it fair
12 deal with, like, driver. You let us pay
13 everything.

14 I think you're gonna make us, like,
15 bankrupt again, and there's gonna be a lot of
16 suicide.

17 So please do not do the things, which is
18 explain to the judge every testimony of the
19 drivers, and please keep only -- the rule
20 change for yourself is not very good idea,
21 please change the rules for in favor of the
22 driver, too.

23 I want to, you to add the Taxi Workers
24 Alliance, they are be (unintelligible) all the
25 time when you're changing the rules, should

1 be -- also be the vote, confidential vote, then
2 you can change the rule because she is the one
3 is fighting for long time, this industry to
4 survive and she is one that bring, like, some
5 stimulus package --

6 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

7 MR. SINGH: We really appreciate it.
8 Please do not harm, go do the harm with the
9 driver and totally responsible for the
10 chairman, who you are, please do not do it.
11 Thank you so much.

12 CHAIR DO: Thank you, Mr. Singh. I also
13 want to recognize Commissioner Sorrentino, who
14 has joined us. Thank you, Commissioner.

15 Alright, Sherryl.

16 MS. ELUTO: Sure. Next speaker, Kuber
17 Sancho-Prasad.

18 MR. PRASAD: Hello, good morning,
19 commissioners. Thank you for giving us the
20 opportunity to speak.

21 I am here with the New York City Taxi
22 Workers Alliance. I am also a driver. I'm
23 supposed to own a medallion, but I am having a
24 little trouble with that, a state transfer.

25 I think this rule is very haphazardly

1 proposed. I know that we want to mandate
2 yellow cabs to be wheelchair accessible for the
3 accessible community, but the availability of
4 types of vehicle, also the cost of vehicles are
5 exorbitant and you guys haven't increased the
6 funding for vehicles. It is still at \$14,000
7 when the vehicles increased from 50,000 to
8 80,000. The existing vehicles are only three
9 vehicles, with Chrysler Pacifica, the Toyota
10 Sienna, and the Ford Transit, and the Ford
11 Transit is discontinued, which was the cheapest
12 of the vehicles and most reliable. The
13 Pacifica is unreliable, and the Sienna is
14 80,000 to \$90,000 with the conversion.

15 We need increased funding for existing
16 vehicles, and not pressuring existing medallion
17 owners who are on the street already to buy
18 these vehicles if they took their vehicle off
19 the road or they need a vehicle extension.

20 We need to -- you guys need to help the
21 existing owners who have the medallion in
22 storage to take them out and buy the wheelchair
23 vehicle because they have no vehicle on the
24 road.

25 Also, needing to talk to car manufacturers

1 to offer more options, like Ford, Toyota,
2 Nissan, I know the City doesn't have a good
3 reputation with this, but still would be
4 willing, if they should talk to these
5 manufacturers and see if we can get vehicles
6 made specifically for wheelchair.

7 Also, if you still have to do conversion,
8 talk to --

9 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.

10 MR. PRASAD: -- more affordable and more
11 sustainable.

12 Thank you very much for listening to my
13 comment, and have a good day. Enjoy the rest
14 of your week. Thank you.

15 MS. ELUTO: Thank you, everyone, for your
16 comments. That concludes our public hearing.

17 Commissioner, I turn it over to you to
18 close the hearing.

19 CHAIR DO: First and foremost, I want to
20 thank everyone for their public comments today.

21 This is something that is incredibly
22 difficult for the TLC. This is something that
23 we worked on with the court to advocate for
24 many of our drivers. We told your stories, and
25 we were not successful in Federal Court, and,

1 therefore, there was a mandate by Judge Daniels
2 and by the Court to get us to fifty percent by
3 implementing a rule that forces the TLC to do
4 one hundred percent until we reach fifty
5 percent of active and authorized.

6 Look, we told your stories, we told them,
7 you know, that this would disproportionately
8 impact drivers, and that we just needed a
9 little bit more time to meet this mandate. We
10 argued that in Court and ultimately we were not
11 successful.

12 I also heard many of your stories today,
13 where we are going to look at the TIF fund, and
14 what I heard is that you need help more
15 up-front and that is what we're gonna take a
16 look at to help. But that means that there is
17 going to have to be some TIF changes overall,
18 but to pull some of those funds up-front and to
19 support drivers with the initial cost of
20 wheelchair accessible vehicles.

21 But I hear you, I know this a difficult
22 time, but this is something that we must do to
23 be in compliance with a Federal Court order.

24 Are there any other commissioners who
25 would like to speak today? I see Paul move.

1 Go ahead, Commission Bader.

2 COMMISSIONER BADER: I mean, I agree with
3 your comments relative to the history. I think
4 that the concerns that we heard are legitimate
5 concerns, and I think it's incumbent upon us to
6 see as many options that we can come up with to
7 alleviate some of these -- the economic
8 hardships that some of these drivers are under
9 and will continue to be under if the rule under
10 these circumstances, so I don't, is all the --
11 needless to -- I just -- it's a very difficult
12 and complicated situation, needless to say, but
13 I think we have responsibilities to both the
14 disability community, as well as to our drivers
15 to try to find some solutions that will
16 alleviate and -- these hardships in as many
17 ways as we can. I don't know all the cases
18 that were made, needless to say, at the Court,
19 relative to the impact, the hardship impact
20 that this was gonna have on so many people.

21 Normally, there are hardship exemptions
22 that are allowed by courts relative to their
23 decisions. I don't know if that opportunity
24 still exists for us to raise those hardship
25 concerns, but -- so that's one level.

<p>\$14000 23:1 29:1 42:6</p> <p>\$15 40:2</p> <p>\$150 9:9</p> <p>\$2000 15:22 23:14</p> <p>\$25000 23:13</p> <p>\$3000 23:12</p> <p>\$40000 30:18</p> <p>\$45000 16:11</p> <p>\$50000 30:17</p> <p>\$80000 18:2 24:19</p> <p>\$90000 21:10 30:18 42:14</p> <p>& 3</p> <p>10th 7:13 47:15</p> <p>26th 8:13</p> <p>ability 36:20</p> <p>able 15:14 19:13 20:6,24 21:5,13 28:15 33:21 36:2 (9)</p> <p>about 3:1 5:6 10:6 14:17 15:18 16:10 19:24 22:11,17 34:19,23 39:15 40:2 (13)</p> <p>absolutely 21:11 22:7</p> <p>accept 13:5</p> <p>access 32:11,14,20</p> <p>accessibility 5:6,7 23:18 36:10 (4)</p> <p>accessible 4:22,25 5:11,12,13,14,19,25 6:12,15 12:10 21:9 24:18 25:6,10,20,24 26:4,16 31:21,25 32:2,5,18,22 38:23,24 39:17 42:2,3 44:20 (31)</p>	<p>accessories 10:12</p> <p>account 3:11</p> <p>accounts 3:4 21:20</p> <p>accurate 47:8</p> <p>achieve 5:18</p> <p>action 26:5 31:14 47:11</p> <p>activate 3:11</p> <p>active 5:24 6:9 44:5</p> <p>actual 27:17</p> <p>actually 11:24 20:13 27:21</p> <p>ada 30:20</p> <p>add 40:23</p> <p>adding 30:6,10</p> <p>addition 14:13 24:8</p> <p>additional 3:16 6:21 12:17 32:4 (4)</p> <p>address 24:20 25:1</p> <p>addressing 25:5 26:8,17</p> <p>adjust 26:8</p> <p>adjusted 23:2</p> <p>adopt 25:8</p> <p>adopted 6:23</p> <p>adopter 11:12</p> <p>advance 3:6</p> <p>advocate 43:23</p> <p>advocated 24:7</p> <p>advocating 12:15</p>	<p>affects 13:1</p> <p>affiliation 3:13</p> <p>afford 29:17 30:1</p> <p>affordable 43:10</p> <p>afforded 25:22</p> <p>after 8:21 14:8</p> <p>again 19:5 26:20 32:3 33:23 40:15 (5)</p> <p>age 28:10</p> <p>agency's 5:6</p> <p>agent 11:11 13:4,12,18 (4)</p> <p>agents 12:2 13:3</p> <p>aggravation 9:18</p> <p>ago 22:10 36:12</p> <p>agree 16:7 45:2</p> <p>agreed 26:17</p> <p>ahead 13:22 14:1 15:2 24:2 29:8 31:8 36:4 39:8 45:1 (9)</p> <p>alleviate 45:7,16 46:3</p> <p>alliance 14:6 15:7 18:25 29:11 40:24 41:22 (6)</p> <p>allison 35:3</p> <p>allotted 7:6</p> <p>allow 21:12 23:11 34:2 36:25 (4)</p> <p>allowed 12:21 45:22</p> <p>allowing 6:23 20:4 32:22 34:4 (4)</p> <p>allows 36:6</p>
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