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**For Immediate Release:**

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**Statement of Ron Sherman, President of the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade Regarding the City Council's FHV Committee Hearing on Enforcement**

The taxi and livery system in New York City is just as broken as the MTA and needs to be fixed just as urgently. We applaud Chairman Diaz for holding this important hearing on enforcement, which plays an important role in solving a host of problems.

Let's start with the obvious. NYPD and TLC enforcement agents are completely overwhelmed by the 108,000 app-based for-hire-vehicles that now flood the streets - a 250% increase since 2012.

One of the consequences of the City's massive failure to reign in the reckless and limitless licensing of 2,000 new app-based for-hire-vehicles every month, is the sharp increase in illegal street hails, which is when unauthorized drivers pick up hails from the street - a dangerous and illegal act prohibited by any vehicle other than a licensed yellow medallion taxicab in Manhattan and the airports or yellow and green taxis that can pick up in the boroughs and Upper Manhattan.

Illegal street hails not only congest Manhattan streets and steal fares from hard-working cabbies but pose an enormous public safety threat. The riding public is too often unaware that drivers that pick up illegally are not insured to pick up, may have a suspended license, often price gouge passengers and could even have a criminal record. Illegal street hail passengers are essentially hitchhiking.

Unfortunately illegal street hails are so rampant that catching and prosecuting violators has become increasingly difficult and simply a cost of doing business.

Taxi operators have already paid dearly for the training, licensing fees and medallion fees that earned them the privilege and exclusive right to pick up street hails. The City has made billions off the sale of medallions that afford this exclusive right. We can debate the City's obligation to stand by that promise - which has been shattered by Uber's on-demand model - but at the very least, the City owes these operators and hard working immigrant drivers, enforcement of the law. And it owes it to the public to protect their safety and their consumer rights.

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