

For Immediate Release

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Statement of Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade regarding the Mayor's "For-Hire Vehicle Transportation Study" and the City Council's Legislative Recommendations

January 15, 2016

Many New Yorkers have felt the dramatic changes in the taxi and for-hire-vehicle markets over the last few years – some positive and some worrisome. While everyone has an opinion of these changes, this study reports on the facts and does so in an unprecedented and objective manner.

One of those underlying facts is that the playing field is uneven among all industries. We strongly agree with the study's recommendation – and the City Council's separate finding – that the playing field must be leveled so that passengers' rights are protected and all industry participants are treated equally.

For example, the yellow taxi industry has committed to making 50% of its overall fleet wheelchair accessible; it provides \$.50 of every fare to the MTA; and has a metered, fully transparent and regulated rate at all times. The e-dispatch industry, dominated by Uber, fails to meet the high standards of the taxi industry in all of these categories – perhaps most shockingly in its lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles. Such disparities between markets create unfair advantages to compete for drivers and passengers, reduces the overall levels of wheelchair accessible vehicles in all sectors, and deprives the MTA from critical funding.

We are particularly pleased that the study has affirmed what every taxi driver has known for quite some time – that illegal street hails are rampant, especially in Midtown Manhattan and must be aggressively stopped in the interest of public safety, consumer protection and fairness for licensed industry participants that play by the rules.

The City Council has announced its own set of legislative reforms – and many of these will go a long way toward evening the playing field and protecting passengers. Transparency of fares, a universal license and stiffer penalties against illegal street hails are among the very laudable and thoughtful policy goals put forth.

However, we are disappointed that Intro 556, a popular bill with 20 sponsors, that protects consumers by limiting price-gouging - or surge-pricing - in the FHV sector, is

not included in this initial packet of reforms, nor are any hard mandates on wheelchair accessibility for the e-dispatch and other sectors. We hope that changes.

If the Mayor's Office, TLC and the City Council remain committed to leveling the playing field, it will serve all New Yorkers well.

About Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade (MTBOT):

MTBOT was founded in 1952 and remains the oldest and largest yellow medallion taxicab advocacy organization representing fleets and owners of more than 5,500 yellow medallion taxicabs. MTBOT fleets are located in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan and lease taxicabs to more than 20,000 drivers. MTBOT operates an innovative driver help center that provides free legal counsel and support services to current and prospective drivers out of its Long Island City headquarters. MTBOT fleets directly employ thousands of dispatchers, mechanics, managers, tow operators and other critical personnel necessary to moving New Yorkers and visitors every day.