

Cab Gab
by Abe Mittleman

Pedicab Bill-We're Shocked!

We're Shocked! We can't believe that the mayor has vetoed the Pedicab Bill.

After all that has been said and done he has done a 180 degree turn and decided that the market place should decide how many pedicabs should be allowed to operate. How about "0"? They never were legal to begin with.

So, now it's back to the City Council for a possible override. Although the bill passed through the city council by a 38 vote margin, that's only 4 more than is needed for an override. So, it's not beyond imagination that some council members can change their minds as the mayor did and kill the whole thing.

It may be wise for the city council to present the bill excluding the provision for limiting the number of pedicabs and including all of the other provisions. Just the insurance requirement should be enough to put most of the pedicabs out of

business. This requirement is for them to have the same amount of insurance a taxis. We believe that few pedicabs if any would be able to afford this.

It appears that the demonstrations by these illegal gypsies have swayed the opinion of our mayor. This is unprecedented. When has any demonstration by anyone ever changed pending legislation. When taxi drivers demonstrate they hear but always look the other way.

It does appears that at least the city council has some level headed members. We have learned from our sources that James Gennaro, who chairs the Environmental Protection Committee, favored a much stricter regulation than what eventually passed. Councilman Genarro wanted an outright ban on picking up street hails. Kudos to him! But shouldn't our "Exclusive Right" to picking up street hails, a right that all medallion taxis have paid a hefty price for cover this. Also, our sources have informed us that Council Speaker Christine Quinn had introduced a bill to ban

pedicabs from midtown a couple of months before she became speaker. Council Speaker Quinn fought hard to get this as close to being respectful of the rights of medallion owners and the safety of the public as possible. Council Speaker Quinn has vowed that the city council will over ride Mayor Bloomberg's veto.

It's hard to imagine that even if the mayor gets his way and there is no cap on the number of pedicabs that the other provisions of the bill will not go forward. Drivers will still have to have a valid and clean New York State drivers license. But unlike real taxi drivers they will not be required to be drug tested. Pedicabs will have to be licensed by the Department of Consumer Affairs. Pedicabs will have to feature rates, license numbers and a (311) complaint number. They will have to be easily recognizable as licensed. The police will have the power to remove all those that are not.

Even after a bill is finally passed it will take (except the ban on electric motorized pedicabs, that will go into

effect immediately) 150 days to go into effect. But this will not really satisfy us in the taxi industry who feel that just their existence is more than should be tolerated.

One of the ways we can keep the pressure on is for taxi drivers to report illegal pedicab activity to 311 whenever they see it. Illegal pedicab activity would include witnessing children under 14 riding in a pedicab without a helmet; pedicabs standing and hawking at no standing zones or taxi stands; pedicabs with more than 3 people; any electric assist or motorized pedicab. If you see any of this just jot down the license number of the pedicab along with the time and place of occurrence then at your earliest convince use phone 311 and report it.

It has also been suggested if taxi drivers really wanted to disrupt pedicab operations, they should rediscover the theater district taxi stands that are there just for them but are rarely utilized by medallion taxis alone. Just about any time the theaters let out all you see in these stands are mostly liveries

and pedicabs.

As a symbol of protest, yellows should line up at the theaters twenty minutes before the shows end and block access for any pedicabs. Pedicabs wait at these stands and steal our business. This is illegal and we should keep them from doing it by using these stands. Despite any legislation if we don't take an active role in stopping them, this illegal practice will continue. If you see them using these stands call 311.

So, while the debate continues so does the unlicensed unregulated and uninsured activities of the pedicabs. With summer coming soon we only hope that their demonstrations and rebellious attitudes don't turn this city into a sea of unregulated pedicabs that keep us all from making a living.

It's our hope that when all is said and done that these unruly illegal operators obey the law and don't proliferate the streets with their illegal vehicles. We have been told that the police are ready, willing, able, and anxious to enforce all rules and

regulations that are passed against them. We hope this is correct!