

CREATING A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR THE TAXI INDUSTRY

Opening Statement

The ridesharing industry is an important, needed addition to our economy; however, the red tape for the taxi industry must be removed, especially in the Metro Vancouver area, so that taxis can cross city boundaries and pick up and drop off passengers wherever they need to. Local taxis want to compete with ride-hailing companies, but on a level playing field, without any boundaries. This will be true economic action that will improve customer service. Currently, archaic government red tape forces taxis to drive back empty (deadhead) after dropping off passengers in neighbouring municipalities. Deadheading leads to inefficient use of taxi fleets, increased congestion, GHG emissions, higher costs, longer wait times for passengers and lower income for drivers.

Background

Ridesharing companies have been given large operating areas by the Passenger Transportation Board in British Columbia. For example, Region 1 encompasses an area from Whistler to Hope and includes Squamish-Lillooet, Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley Regional Districts.

Local taxi companies were promised a fair and level playing field to compete with the ridesharing industry. This has not happened. Ridesharing industry is able to move across city boundaries, but this privilege does not extend to the taxi industry.

The Lower Mainland is facing a transportation crisis where not enough options are permitted, and congestion is rampant. By having ridesharing and traditional transportation models complement each other to better serve residents and businesses, just as they do in communities across Canada and around the world, we can see a reduction in congestion. Rather than competing with taxi, ridesharing companies like Uber and Lyft are growing the overall transportation pie. This is most likely because ridesharing has attracted a whole new group of passengers, people who cannot regularly afford taxis or drive themselves instead.

Currently, archaic government red tape forces taxis to drive back empty (deadhead) after dropping off passengers in neighbouring municipalities. Deadheading leads to inefficient use of taxi fleets, increased congestion, GHG emissions, higher costs, longer wait times for passengers and lower income for drivers.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Provincial Government:

1. Remove archaic taxi boundaries and allow all taxis in Metro Vancouver to pick-up and drop-off anywhere in the Lower Mainland to serve the public better.

Submitted by the Surrey Board of Trade