Testimony of Chair and Commissioner David Do
New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission
Before the City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Oversight - TLC – Commuter Vans, For-Hire Vehicles, and
Licensing in NYC's Evolving Transportation Landscape
September 15, 2025

Good morning, honorable Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am joined today by Taxi and Limousine Commission General Counsel Sherryl Eluto and Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Community Affairs James DiGiovanni. The for-hire transportation sector has been rapidly changing, and my testimony today will provide a snapshot of the state of the industry, important developments since the last hearing, and address the five bills on the agenda. Our sister agencies, the Department of Transportation and the Office of Technology and Innovation, will discuss three of these bills in more detail.

TLC-licensed vehicles continue to move New Yorkers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We are not only the city that never sleeps but also the city that never stops moving, made possible by nearly 178,000 TLC-licensed drivers. Every minute, there are on average 612 trips, and this has translated into 158 million trips through the first half of this year, compared to the 151 million trips that were completed in the first six months of 2024. As of June, there were cumulatively 121 million ride-hail trips, 24 million yellow taxi trips, and about 12 million for-hire vehicle trips.

These trips are more accessible than ever. This June, TLC achieved 50% accessibility of the city's active yellow taxi fleet. As Commissioner Christina Curry of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities stated, "For the disability community, this progress means more than just numbers; it translates into greater independence, reduced isolation, and better access to work, school, healthcare, and everyday life." If you include the more than 7,400 for-hire vehicles that are also wheelchair accessible, the TLC's 13,000-strong wheelchair-accessible vehicle fleet is by far the most accessible in the nation.

The robustness of the overall industry is mirrored in the for-hire vehicle sector. At the beginning of the year there were 782 bases compared to 728 at the beginning of 2024. Trip volumes for livery, black car, and luxury limousine bases, as well as high-volume bases, continue to show strong performance in comparison to 2019 levels. Within the for-hire vehicle sector, TLC began implementing the state-authorized COVID-19 Livery Vehicle Recovery Act on April 15, 2025.

The high-volume for-hire vehicle sector also remains in good health. In June, this sector completed approximately 20 million trips, a similar number to June 2024. Lyft and Uber continue to dispatch about 20% of trips to electric and wheelchair-accessible vehicles, exceeding the current 15% Green Rides baseline for 2025. I mentioned earlier in the year that TLC was in the process of amending its first-in-the-nation driver pay rules for ride-hail drivers, authorized by Local Law 150 of 2018. Before these rules were implemented, 85% of drivers in this sector were earning less than the equivalent minimum wage. In

June, TLC adopted amended rules, reaffirming our commitment to improving the economic security of licensees in this sector. For a sample trip of 7.5 miles and 30 minutes, the minimum per-trip payment is approximately $29, an overall increase of approximately 5% compared to the 2024 rates and 26% compared to the original 2019 rates. As part of these amendments, TLC updated the per-mile rate to account for increases in driver expenses. Crucially, the new rules also limit the ability of Uber and Lyft to lock drivers out of their platforms. Under our new regulations, they must now provide at least 72 hours' notice before denying access, and they must allow those drivers to accept dispatches for at least 16 hours once they're back on. I want to thank the TLC staff, advocates, researchers, and licensees who helped get this rule package to the finish line.

Turning to commuter vans, the industry continues its slow but steady recovery. There are now 51 licensed vans compared to 38 at the beginning of the year. This progress is partially thanks to Empire State Development's Commuter Van Stabilization Program, which provides funding to help offset the cost of insurance and vehicle safety upgrades. Additionally, licensed vans continue to operate safely. Of the 66 safety-related violations issued to commuter vans in calendar year 2024, only 7 were issued to licensed owners and drivers. Only 2 licensed vans experienced collisions, with no reported injuries. This contrasts with the unlicensed vans, which unfairly compete with licensed vans and are not inspected for safety. TLC continues to conduct joint operations with NYPD against these illegal operators—9 operations in Brooklyn and Queens in 2025, with more in the works. Enforcement lays the foundation for a safe and healthy industry, and we continue to recruit, onboard, and hire new officers. We currently have 114 officers and just this morning initiated another class of 34 cadets.

We are also working to expeditiously implement local laws recently adopted by the Council. Local Law 78, sponsored by Council Member Gutiérrez, mandates that all taxis and FHVs display decals warning of the deadly practice of "dooring," or opening a car door without checking for approaching cyclists. TLC previously provided this decal to drivers for free, but it wasn't mandatory. I'm happy to inform you that we've secured enough free decals for all licensed taxis and FHVs, and on September 3rd we held a public hearing on amended rules to implement this new law. At the same hearing, we also introduced rules to implement Local Law 90, sponsored by Council Member De La Rosa, changing the maximum required personal injury protection or no-fault insurance coverage to 200% of the state level, or $100,000. This aligns with Mayor Adams's goal to reduce costs for working families while also ensuring that for-hire drivers and passengers still have the highest personal injury protection in the state.

Lastly, I want to bring your attention to the bills on today's agenda.

Introduction 139 of 2024, sponsored by Chair Brooks-Powers, increases TLC's Board of Commissioners from nine to eleven members, requiring the two additional commissioners to hold valid TLC driver licenses. Since this proposal alters the composition of the Commission, we have asked the Law Department to review this bill for any legal concerns. Respectfully, we've opposed this for many years, as asking commissioners to regulate the very industry they make their living from is not appropriate, given that the Commission regularly considers items relating to penalties, driver pay, safety standards, and other topics that directly impact licensed drivers and the riding public. Commissioners must be impartial, which could be challenging for a licensee. As such, we encourage the Council to fill the existing vacancy on the Commission with a candidate who has past TLC-related experience, rather than an active licensee. We already have one such experienced commissioner, Paul Bader, who brings his years of work as a licensed driver to bear on every vote.

We appreciate the goal of ensuring that drivers' views are considered in TLC decision-making, and we are always ready to work with you to ensure that drivers have an opportunity to make their voices heard. Since this legislation was first introduced, we've invested heavily in understanding the driver experience. From surveying nearly 7,000 drivers to guide our pay rules, to the Medallion Relief Program, to establishing the Owner Driver Resource Center and Driver Protection Unit, TLC has made drivers a priority. I won't pretend to know what it's like to be a full-time driver, but I underwent the TLC's licensing process myself, and I periodically drive taxis and FHVs to better understand driver needs without collecting fares or tips.

Introduction 1347 of 2025 requires the TLC, Department of Transportation, and Police Department to develop a checklist of laws, rules, and regulations, and for officers to use this list during commuter van enforcement operations. Enforcement across all sectors is a top concern for TLC, and our van enforcement figures reflect that. In 2025, TLC issued 113 summonses to unlicensed commuter vans, significantly more than the 59 issued in 2024. However, this bill would make enforcement against unlicensed vans more difficult and likely impede future progress. Our trained officers already check for all applicable violations. Requiring them to go through a lengthy physical checklist during a stop will add unnecessary time and steps as more illegal vans pass by. In effect, the administrative burden would outweigh any real gains.

Introduction 115 of 2024, sponsored by Council Member Avilés, requires the Office of Technology and Innovation to create a mobile application that provides users with real-time information about electric vehicle charging stations. Our Green Rides Initiative has increased charging demand from TLC drivers, and more than 300 new charger plugs have been added in New York City since our *Electrification in Motion* report was released, but a new, city-run application would be an incredibly costly duplicate of tools that already exist. EV owners can already access a myriad of charging apps. There are government tools like the Alternative Fueling Station Locator from the U.S. Department of Energy and map apps like Waze, Apple, and Google Maps, which list charging stations. A duplicative app would require continuous funding and resources to maintain, with little additional utility.

Introduction 1000 of 2024, sponsored by Council Member Brannan, allows for-hire vehicles to park or stand in commercial parking meter areas for a limited time. We understand that relief areas are vital to the working conditions of our licensees, which is why we are working with the DOT and driver advocacy groups to expand the existing 112 relief stand locations, which allow drivers to park for up to one hour. This is a top priority for the Administration, and we are always looking for commitment and space from community stakeholders. I encourage the members of the committee to recommend additional locations to both TLC and DOT. At the same time, the Administration also recognizes that more dynamic curb management must not jeopardize access by commercial delivery trucks or parking meter operations. As TLC does not regulate signage, parking meters, or curb management, we defer to the DOT's position on this bill.

Introduction 1346 of 2025, also sponsored by Chair Brooks-Powers, requires the DOT to study commuter van service and produce a public report every four years. The Administration believes that a report would be useful for future policymaking and helpful for evaluating the industry's recovery. I want to thank the members of the Commuter Van Working Group, which was convened by the Chair, who helped to develop this bill. Since this legislation requires action from a separate agency, we again defer to the DOT's position on this bill.

Thank you for considering my testimony. As always, it is an honor to be invited into this chamber to discuss the work of TLC. I look forward to working with all the esteemed members of the Committee to develop legislation that ensures New York City continues to have the safest and most well-regulated for-hire vehicle industry in the entire country. I'm now happy to answer any questions.

OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Oversight - TLC – Commuter Vans, For-Hire Vehicles, and Licensing in NYC's Evolving Transportation Landscape

Int 115-2024, a Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the creation of a mobile application that provides information about electric vehicle charging stations.

September 15, 2025

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Please accept this written testimony for **Introduction 115 of 2024** on behalf of the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI).

This legislation, sponsored by Council Member Avilés, would require OTI to create a mobile application that provides users with real-time information about electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. A new application would be duplicative of available resources outside of government. There are already numerous tools available to help drivers locate charging stations, such as the Alternative Fueling Station Locator from the U.S. Department of Energy's Alternative Fuels Data Center, which shows electric vehicle charging stations across the United States by charging level, access type, and station. Private companies have also built websites and applications available to consumers, and some vehicles have built-in navigation that can direct drivers to the nearest charging station. Apps like Waze and Apple and Google Maps also provide charger location information.

If there remains a gap in information on charging that the private sector has not been able to fulfill, it is not clear that this legislation would provide what EV drivers need. Real-time information about the availability of chargers, to the extent it exists, would need to be shared by the companies that provide the service. Additionally, the city would need to build two applications: one for iOS, and another for Android, and would need to continue maintaining and updating the applications in perpetuity. This would be a costly endeavor that would provide information that is already easily available and accessible. We believe that taxpayer dollars would be better allocated towards other projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony today.

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Introduction 1000 of 2024

As TLC states, DOT recognizes the critical role that relief stands play for the health of livery drivers. As mentioned, we are working with TLC to expand the number of locations for these relief stands. DOT is tasked with also making sure our streets function safely and efficiently. Part of this work is recognizing the need for a more dynamic curb. In recent years, we have implemented strategies to modify parking regulations to reflect current usages. As truck deliveries continue to grow across the city, this proposal weakens the efforts to better manage congestion on our streets. As written, Intro 1000 would displace delivery vehicles' access to the curb and increase the potential for those vehicles to double park. Additionally, Intro 1000 would require challenging reengineering of existing payment systems in coordination with the NYPD and the Department of Finance, which would create significant fiscal implications. We look forward to working with the sponsors, the TLC, and all stakeholders to identify additional relief stand locations.

Introduction 1346 of 2025

As TLC states, the commuter van industry serves an important facet of our urban transportation system as we address mobility and safety for all users of the public right-of-way. Since DOT provides a final recommendation to TLC on approval or rejection of requested commuter van authority and territory, we acknowledge the need to continue studying the evolution of commuter van service and operations. Our research estimates that commuter vans serve up to 70,000 riders daily who rely upon them, especially in minority and low-income communities largely in the outer-boroughs.

In 2018, DOT produced a citywide commuter van study to better understand the industry and its impact on the transportation network. This study provided insights to guide policymaking, with recommendations that have already been implemented including waiving the requirement for petitions and signatures before a new Van Authority can be recommended by DOT. Since then, there have been some changes to the industry's landscape: 1) Local Law 7 of 2017 capping the number of commuter van licenses to 735, and 2) the growth of the for-hire vehicle industry. A new study may have some modest benefits that assist TLC in making policies. We look forward to working with the committee and TLC to identify integral study goals that best suit this evolving sector.

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