

NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
PROPOSED RULES GOVERNING TICKET SELLERS

42 Broadway, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10004
September 16, 2019

INDEX

[All names are listed in order in which they speak]

Carlos Ortiz, Hearing Officer	3
Eva Lee, Majestic Harbor Sightseeing Cruises	5
Ted Fields, Consultant, Big City Tourism	6
Kareem Holmes	9
Tom Kovacic, Direct of Marketing, Empire Outlets	10
Opeyemi Jegede, Ticket Agent	11
Olwabamise Jegede	14
John Gore, Manufacturer of motor coaches	17
Joshua Knoller, Statue Cruises	21
Carl Accettola, Battery Park resident	23
Felix Vicioso	25
Li Zhen Wan	26
Corey Lashley	28
Anthony Malone, Director of Operations, Peir A	28
Malik Bey, Ticket Agent	30
Tim Berton, Boat Operator	32
Travis Noyes, Chairman, Destination St. George	33
Matthew Washington, Deputy Manhattan Borough President	37
James Crawford, Ticket Seller	40
Gregory Reddick	43
Ibrahima Konate	44
Alimame Suwareh, Ticket Agent	46
Raji Mhamadu	49
Ilham Salbat, Ticket Agent	50
Yang Gao, Boat Operator	51

1 MR. CARLOS ORTIZ: Good morning. My name is
2 Carlos Ortiz. I'm designated as the hearing officer
3 for the public hearing of department of consumer
4 affairs proposed rules regarding ticket sellers. This
5 hearing is being held in the 5th floor conference room
6 of the department's offices at 42 Broadway in Lower
7 Manhattan. It is now 10:30 on Monday September 16,
8 2019, and I'm hereby convening the public hearing on
9 this proposed rule.

10 The proposed rule was published in the city
11 record on August 15, 2019. Copies of the published
12 notice and rules are available on the table to my left
13 as well as online. The department has proposed these
14 rules pursuant to the authority vested in the
15 commissioner of the department of consumer affairs
16 such as one of 432203 f of the New York City Charter
17 at sections 104-3 and 2203F of the New York City
18 Charter, section 20-104B, 20-558, and 20-702 of the
19 New York City Administrative Code.

20 This hearing affords the public the
21 opportunity to comment on all aspects of the rules the
22 department has proposed. The department will
23 carefully review all testimony and written comments
24 received at this hearing and will give due weight and
25 consideration to all adequately substantiated

1 proposals and recommendations that are submitted for
2 the record at this hearing.

3 To ensure that everyone is seeking to
4 testify will have the opportunity to do so, I will
5 strictly follow these ground rules. Signing in and
6 order of appearance. Anyone seeking to testify must
7 complete a registration card so you can be correctly
8 identified in the hearing record. Witnesses will be
9 called to testify in the order that they have signed
10 in. Anyone who does not appear when his or her name
11 is called will be deemed to have passed over the
12 opportunity to testify. Persons, persons who are
13 passed over will be called at the end of the hour.
14 Persons who still do not appear must then sign in
15 again if they still wish to testify.

16 Time limits on testimony. Each witness will
17 have a maximum of three minutes to testify. To be
18 fair to everyone seeking to testify, I will strictly
19 apply the three-minute rule to every speaker. If your
20 comments are longer than three minutes, please
21 synthesize your oral testimony and have a written copy
22 for the record.

23 Written testimony. Unlike the limit on the
24 time for testimony, there's no limit on the number of
25 pages you submit as written comments or as documents

1 for the record. The written submission will be made
2 part of the record as exhibits presented with your
3 testimony. For a few housekeeping announcements,
4 emergency exit, emergency exits are located out the
5 door and to your right. Bathroom is out the door and
6 to your left. Please turn off all your cell phones or
7 set them to vibrate if you can. Thank you very much.
8 I will now call the first witness, Eva Lee.

9 MS. EVA LEE: Hi. My name is Eva Lee. I
10 represent the boat owner of the Majestic Harbor
11 Sightseeing Cruises. We, we operate out of Pier 36,
12 which is currently the only pier that is not allowed
13 to take street sales customers. Our business is based
14 on -- it's a sightseeing business. We have groups,
15 and we also do online sales, such as Groupon,
16 FareHarbor, et cetera, but a big part of our business
17 model is street sellers.

18 Our operator had already imposed many of the
19 suggestions that are here on this, on this proposal
20 that's out for the hearing. The tickets all did state
21 that we do not land at the Statue of Liberty. Our
22 licensed Department of Consumer Affairs tour guides
23 would make such announcements on the, on the
24 loudspeakers during the tour. We further propose as a
25 company, if we're allowed as a, as a boat owner, if

1 we're allowed to continue to take street sales
2 operate -- customers, to put additional signage in
3 various languages throughout the boat, and to employ
4 one of the deckhands to, again, speak to the customers
5 to ensure that all these regulations are actually
6 followed.

7 We think that Pier 36 is the only pier
8 that's prohibited to take the street sales agents'
9 tickets, and this has been detrimental to our
10 business. And we would like this ban lifted so that
11 we can have the same rights and opportunities of all
12 the other sightseeing boat owners. That's it.

13 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. And please feel free
14 to make your way to the front so you can -- we can
15 make sure these recording devices capture your
16 testimony. Next witness, Ted Fields.

17 MR. TED FIELDS: Yes. Good morning,
18 everyone. Ted Fields, I'm a industry consultant as
19 well a representative of a new company out there, Big
20 City Tourism. What I want to focus on is we as well
21 have been operating out of, out of Pier 36, and while,
22 as a company, we're in full support of what the DCA is
23 proposing, from a penalty phase standpoint, in
24 general, to make this work, and to get as close to a
25 cure as possible, there has to be a true symbiotic

1 relationship that's established between DCA, NYPD,
2 City Hall, the ticket-selling businesses, as well as
3 the ticket agents and vessel ow-, vessel owners and
4 operators. To approach this from, from one
5 standpoint, and to place the responsibility solely on
6 the agents, we'll find ourselves here again six months
7 to a year from now.

8 I understand that where DCA is concerned and
9 the City is concerned, there may be parameters where
10 costs are concerned where compliance and regulatory
11 enforcement is concerned, and currently we're leaving
12 that in the hands of NYPD. NYPD isn't always versed
13 on what the particular codes are. As well, with the
14 sheer volume of tourists that move through this area,
15 it's impossible for NPYD to regulate this cohesively.

16 As the previous speaker said, at least
17 within the last two years, it has been listed on every
18 ticket that the boats will not dock at Liberty Island.
19 But now we're dealing with an issue of being
20 conspicuous versus inconspicuous. So as a company,
21 Big City Tourism proposes to go the more conspicuous
22 route, where not only largescale signage but as well
23 vouchers that detail out each and every element of
24 what you're going to receive and not going to receive
25 will be available per tourist in 25 different

1 languages.

2 The issue we're dealing with here is, is an
3 issue of checkers and not chess. It's an issue of
4 transparency and disclosure, and the responsibility
5 has to be taken by the ticket selling agents as well,
6 but the ticket selling businesses, the owners, the
7 operators, we all need to be active participants in
8 that. Again, otherwise we're going to find ourselves
9 in the same boat where no cure is allowed.

10 Regarding the, the law itself, I think with
11 most administrative code, legislative code, that the
12 definition section, I think that's necessary. You
13 know, things like aggressive vending. We all have an
14 idea of what aggressive vending and aggressive selling
15 is, but if it's not clearly defined, it becomes
16 extremely interpretive. And we could have a big
17 legal, legal issue on your hand from either side, from
18 all sides participating.

19 And last but not least, we can look into the
20 future of creating some sort of training program where
21 we work hand in hand to create a curriculum so these,
22 these agents aren't just filling out a application,
23 leaving it to them to read and understand all the code
24 that's listed within there because the average ticket
25 agent is not an attorney. So some sort of training

1 program that they'll participate in timely or at the
2 time of licensing going forward further insurancing --
3 insuring the protection of the tourists, the City and
4 the politicians, the NYPD, the ticket selling
5 businesses, and the ticket agents. All right, thank
6 you.

7 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Kareem Holmes.
8 Please take a seat.

9 MR. KAREEM HOLMES: I'll be short. I
10 submitted most of my information in, in a
11 [unintelligible] [00:08:03] via e-mail 'cause it's
12 pretty long, but pretty much, it's piggybacking off of
13 what Teddy was saying. I think one of the most
14 important things here is the training, the
15 transparency, and accountability. We've already -- up
16 until this point, most of the companies already have
17 put the disclosure that you guys are proposing on
18 their tickets. I've seen most of the tickets that,
19 that are available, and they, they do say that. We do
20 as well, and we also provide signage as well.

21 In my proposal via e-mail, you'll see also
22 pictures as well as of what I'm talking about.
23 There's -- will be a, a lot more information clear.
24 Thank you.

25 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Tom Kovacic. Do you

1 mind making your way closer?

2 MR. TOM KOVACIC: Sure. Hello, I'm Tom
3 Kovacic. I'm the director of marketing at Empire
4 Outlets of Staten Island. I'm here today speaking in
5 support of the proposed DCA rule changes regarding
6 ticket sellers. Empire Outlets is a new \$550 million
7 retail center located in the neighborhood of St.
8 George, Staten Island. It supports 1,200 jobs and is
9 the anchor of the renaissance of the North Shore of
10 Staten Island. Empire Outlets is the first and only
11 outlet center. Its primary customers are
12 international tourists, and the transportation method
13 that they use to get there is the Staten Island Ferry.

14 When we opened up our outlet center in May,
15 our dep-, our deployed promotional marketing teams at
16 the ferry terminal promote the opening of the center.
17 Our marketing agents were physically threatened by the
18 ticket agents illegally stationed outside the ferry
19 terminal, and we had to withdraw the program for their
20 safety. Every day our customers have to fight their
21 way through 50 to 60 ticket agents in front of the
22 Staten Island ferry. These visitors are regularly
23 told falsehoods about the ferry to encourage them not
24 to take the ferry and visit Staten Island. Many are
25 told that the Outlets cannot be accessed by the ferry.

1 The Staten Island Ferry is a doorstep to
2 Staten Island. It is the vehicle in which most of the
3 visitors to our shops, restaurants, and cultural
4 institutions travel. Staten Island will never reach
5 its full potential as a visitor destination with the
6 hordes of illegal ticket selling blocking the entrance
7 to our borough. We ask that the DCA protect the
8 entrance to Staten Island and increase penalties to
9 the companies illegally selling tickets to Battery
10 Park. Thank you.

11 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Ope Jegede.

12 MS. OPEYEMI JEGEDE: Thank you very much.
13 Thank you for this meeting, this area of opportunity.
14 My name is Opeyemi Jegede. I'm a, I'm a ticket agent,
15 and I have a master's degree in pharmacology and
16 therapeutics. The summary of what is happening in
17 Battery Park is hypocrisy, favoritism, monopoly at the
18 expense of ticket agents. Big companies are
19 hypocrites, and the likes of Hornblower, TopView,
20 Circle Line, they sell tickets in Battery Park using
21 unlicensed ticket agents and agents of growing
22 companies.

23 They use agents in disguise by not putting
24 their uniforms on, on them in order to conceal their
25 presence but sell their tickets through them. This

1 means one agent can sell for four different companies
2 competing, thereby ferment indiscipline in the sector.
3 Example, you can see [unintelligible] [00:11:22].
4 Police have natural hatred for ticket agents in
5 Battery Park due to the persistent, untrue bias
6 reported by newspapers. Ticket agents in Battery Park
7 are treated in isolation, different from all other
8 agents in New York City. Arrests are made on baseless
9 allegations which are use not -- usually dismissed by
10 court, but they keep arresting agents to keep
11 exaggerating their arrest statistics.

12 The product we sell is essential. We sell
13 tickets to view the harbor and take pictures of the
14 iconic sites, such as Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridge,
15 Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, skyline of the World
16 Trade Center. A lot of tourists love this. There
17 should be freedom of enterprise, freedom of choice,
18 and fair trade.

19 Hornblower, who owns [unintelligible]
20 [00:12:10] cruises, sell this product in both Pier 15
21 and Vesey Street Pier. In fact, the ticket were sold
22 in place of their product during government shutdown.
23 Right now from ca-, I mean, during government shutdown
24 from [unintelligible] [00:12:23]. But the media
25 report as if we sell tour that do not exist, or we

1 defraud people to sell Staten Island Ferry. Daily
2 News especially is a media outfit that Hornblower uses
3 as front page for advert. On the other hand, they
4 write biased, one-sided report, unprofessional,
5 unethical imbalances against ticket agents. They in
6 fact call us names like rogues, scammers, illegals,
7 and so on.

8 This I regard as injustice, unfairness. The
9 city should ensure that the big companies must not
10 have the power to monopolize this sector by poisoning
11 it with biased reports, which affect juvenile
12 companies and ticket agents.

13 As I am speaking, Pier 36 has been shut down
14 for almost a month now, thereby killing the growing
15 companies, but the giant companies are still on the
16 street doing the same thing. This approach will only
17 succeed in killing young dreams and as injustice or
18 favoritism. We need to face the reality that big
19 companies have an agenda to eliminate the smaller
20 growing companies.

21 Now I have the conclusion. The conclusion
22 is leaving this sector in the hands of greedy
23 monopolists and failure of the city authorities to
24 oversee this all-important sector consequently bring
25 enormous instability and frustration to the lives of

1 ticket agents, families, and dependents. For
2 instance, sales of ticket agent have been stopped for
3 over half a dozen times recently with no tangible
4 solution afterward. It is time that the city
5 authorities take the bull by the horn by addressing
6 these three cogent issues.

7 Implementing a framework that is legitimate,
8 sustainable, and verifiable as reprimand for erring
9 ticket agent; designing a system of accountability for
10 all operating companies and monitoring the progress,
11 which would include feedback and sanctions; most
12 importantly, creating a level playing ground for all
13 operators without fear of favor. Thank you.

14 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Oluwabamise Jegede.

15 MR. OLUWABAMISE JEGEDE: Yeah, thank you for
16 the opportunity of this hearing. My name is
17 Oluwabamise Jegede. Most of what we [unintelligible]
18 [00:14:40] has been said by Kareem and my colleague
19 here. While in summary, I'll go to this. I have a
20 background. I begin with while I -- we were growing
21 up in Nigeria, the only country that we wanted to set
22 our feet on was the United State of America. We even
23 had a kindergarten song for this.

24 As we grew older, we would have left behind
25 this child -- as a child fantasy, but no, even in

1 adulthood, when I held onto the dream of America while
2 we studied at the prestigious University of Ibadan.
3 Friends who went to the US on academic exchange
4 programs returned with ebullient stories of the
5 greatness of America. It was upon this notion --
6 nation's notion of fairness and freedom that our
7 pursuit of the American dream is built.

8 In 2016, I started as a ticket agent. Soon
9 after, I founded a company name Aurora Tourism
10 Services, LLC, New York Iconic Cruises, which was
11 nurtured into a sightseeing company. Through this
12 company we were able to bring reforms to the business
13 of ticket selling in Battery Park.

14 Prior to my effort and my eff-, and the
15 effort of my ticket sellers' employees, ticket selling
16 in Battery Park was stigmatized as a rogue business.
17 Other seller sold and dealt with competitors in
18 unethical manner. As much as we cannot claim to have
19 reached perfection, we would -- we have sold honorably
20 during our time at Battery Park. This is why we were
21 granted the right to sell with Majestic Princess over
22 a year ago.

23 Then this year, certain parties would be bad
24 actors who had been previously banned from Battery
25 Park for constant violations of ticket seller's law

1 return to Battery Park. I warned those parties that
2 the troubles would start up again, but I was ignored.
3 And just as I said, the troubles started again. It is
4 not irrelevant to mention at this point that we have
5 written over a dozen correspondences to the city
6 agency, its personnel, contractor over a period
7 spanning ten months on these issues without a single
8 reply up till this moment. This refusal to respond to
9 me clearly demonstrate that the city and its agents
10 are not acting fairly towards the true stakeholder in
11 Battery Park.

12 Despite the fact that we are law abiding,
13 tax paying, and responsible company providing
14 livelihood for hundreds of families, a letter was
15 issued to def-, to the effective of ceasing to operate
16 from Pier 36 on the 21st of August 2019 for people who
17 were selling in Batter Park. There was never a prior
18 warning nor a single response to any of the numerous
19 correspondent we had written months earlier attempt to
20 get the City to deal with this wrongdoing--

21 MR. ORTIZ: Time.

22 MR. JEGEDE: --at Battery Park. I have this
23 written down. Everybody could have this. I will
24 provide the copies on their website. Thank you.

25 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you, sir.

1 MR. JEGEDE: Yes, sir, you're welcome, sir.

2 MR. ORTIZ: Just a reminder if anybody who
3 walked in after we started. If you want to testify,
4 make sure you signed in and you fill out a
5 registration card and leave the card up here at the
6 front with me. It should be right there on that table
7 on the left. Corey Lashley. Corey Lashley? Okay.
8 Office of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer.
9 James Crawford. James Crawford? John Gore.

10 MR. JOHN GORE: Good morning. I'm John
11 Gore.

12 MR. ORTIZ: Yes, sir, I would suggest
13 that -- if you can come to the front--

14 MR. GORE: Sure.

15 MR. ORTIZ: --we want to make sure your
16 testimony is captured over here. Thank you.

17 MR. GORE: Good morning. I'm John Gore.
18 I'm involved in the transportation industry. I'm a
19 manufacturer of motor coaches, custom made, but double
20 decker buses. I work with probably every federal
21 government agency [unintelligible] [00:18:43] command
22 posts, and I've been in this business for 35 years.
23 And I'm really woven into the fabric of New York City
24 commercial transportation. I work with all three
25 airports. And I've met a lot of people in this

1 industry, and I think there are good operators and
2 there are operators. I'm a-, and I'm able to spot
3 'em.

4 I'm here today to talk about Mr. Jegede and
5 his company, Iconic Tours, and, and the boat Majestic
6 boat. I've known Mr. Jegede to be honest,
7 hardworking, and law abiding. The gentleman came from
8 Nigeria, has a master's degree. His wife's a
9 pharmacist. Really decent people.

10 For three years, Mr. Jegede has been working
11 at Battery Park with his ticket vendors selling
12 tickets for a boat that takes tourists out to the
13 Statue of Liberty. That boat is the Majestic
14 Princess. The boat does not stop at the Statue of
15 Liberty Island. It tours around the island so that
16 people can see the statue up close, take pictures.
17 The tickets they sell says that the boat does not stop
18 at the island. Many tourists do not want to get off
19 at the island and climb the Statue, me being one of
20 them, and are wanting only to take a close look. They
21 do not want to take the time to do more.

22 All of Mej-, Mr. Jegede's ticket sellers are
23 legally licensed to sell tickets by the DCA. All of
24 Mr. Jegede's sellers wear logo shirts with the name
25 New York Iconic Tours on them. All ticket sellers

1 wear the DCA license around their neck at all times.
2 If there are problems with unethical behavior from
3 ticket sellers at Battery Park, it is not due to Mr.
4 Jegede's employees. In fact, whatever changes the DCA
5 wishes to make to the rules governing the ticket
6 sellers, Mr. Jegede welcomes. He's a -- he's -- his
7 employees follow the rules, and it's others that
8 don't.

9 If anyone questions this, I ask that you
10 research how many tickets you've been issued to his
11 employees. It will pre-, be a precious few. Mr.
12 Jegede's ticket sellers are the only company currently
13 not permitted to sell at Battery Park. The only boat
14 affected by this is the Majestic Princess. This --
15 these two gentlemen are honest businessmen. His boat
16 partner and himself are victims of an unfair
17 application of the laws of this city. If you make the
18 short trip to Battery Park and observe, you will see
19 scores of ticket sellers working for other boat
20 companies busily selling tour tickets to tourists.

21 Some of these sellers will do unscrupulous
22 things and some will put heavy pressure on tourists to
23 buy for them -- buy from them. Some sellers will lie
24 and say the boat is going to the island. It's clear
25 that the rule imposed by the city economic development

1 EDC has failed to solve or even address this problem
2 on rogue ticket sellers at Battery Park, so we ask
3 here in the public forum with New York City govt
4 officials present. Revoke the unfair discriminatory
5 EDC policy that prohibits only one ticket seller
6 company from working and making a living.

7 The EDC claims that boats that leave from
8 other New York City piers--

9 MR. ORTIZ: That's time, sir.

10 MR. GORE: Okay, sir.

11 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you very much.

12 MR. GORE: Thank you. Thank you. Here's a
13 copy for the record.

14 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Josh Knoller.

15 MR. JOSHUA KNOLLER: Hi, I'm Joshua Knoller,
16 and I'm testifying on behalf of Statue Cruises. As
17 the official provider of ferry service to the Statue
18 of Liberty and Ellis Island, Statue Cruises serves
19 almost 4 million visitors each year from Battery Park
20 to two of our nation's most prominent landmarks, over
21 4 million visitors. In addition to our concession
22 contract with the National Park Service, Statue
23 Cruises also has a license agreement with the New York
24 City Department and Parks and Recreation to operate
25 out of Battery Park.

1 We take great pride in providing this
2 memorable and iconic experience to visitors from
3 around the globe. Unfortunately, thousands are being
4 denied this opportunity as they are pressured into
5 overpaying for bogus sightseeing options that
6 are at best misrepresentative. To be clear, Statue
7 Cruises does not employ street ticket sellers. A
8 visitor may purchase tickets to the Statue of Liberty
9 and Ellis Island online at our website,
10 StatueCruises.com, over the phone, or in person inside
11 Castle Clinton.

12 Unfortunately, on a daily basis, we receive
13 feedback from customers who complain that they were
14 confronted by aggressive and intimidating ticket
15 sellers in Battery Park, who make false verbal
16 statements concerning our service. A common
17 misrepresentation being communicated is that their
18 boats stop at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island,
19 when in reality, they only sail near the Statue of
20 Liberty and Ellis Island. Other false claims being
21 used to dupe tourists include the Statue of Liberty is
22 closed or that there's a five-hour wait to visit.
23 Neither are true, and this proposed rule would only
24 address the former misrepresentation.

25 These same talkers convince unsuspecting

1 visitors, many of whom are not proficient in the
2 English language, to purchase a ticket for a
3 sightseeing experience that takes them nowhere,
4 purposely deterring them from visiting our national
5 parks, and leaving a stain on our city's thriving
6 tourism industry. While we are supportive of this new
7 proposed rule prohibiting a ticket seller from
8 implying that a trip or tour includes any destination
9 that would not be included in the trip or tour, in
10 particular Ellis Island, we also know that this rule
11 is only a small piece of the puzzle.

12 These ticket sellers who are also licensed
13 by the DCA are in violation of current city rules and
14 regulations. The current rules of the City of New
15 York state no person in or on any property under the
16 jurisdiction of the Department shall sell, offer for
17 sale, hire, lease, or let anything whatsoever
18 including but not limited to goods, services, or
19 entertainment, or provide -- to offer to provide
20 services, items, or entertainment in exchange for a
21 donation.

22 While we commend DCA for their efforts in
23 combating the predatory and sometimes dangerous
24 situation in Battery Park that has been ongoing for
25 over six long years and counting, we take this

1 opportunity to note that these actions of these
2 vendors are already illegal because they are selling
3 in Battery Park. And these same ticket sellers are
4 licensed by DCA. We look forward to continuing to
5 work with DCA, NYPD, NYC Department of Parks and
6 Recreation, City Council, NYC EDC, the Port Authority
7 of New York and New Jersey, and other stakeholders on
8 this important public safety issue. Thank you for
9 your consideration.

10 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you.

11 MR. KNOLLER: Yep, thank you.

12 MR. ORTIZ: Carl Accettola.

13 MR. CARL ACCETTOLA: That's me.

14 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you.

15 MR. ACCETTOLA: Sir, can I ask you what your
16 name was?

17 MR. FIELDS: Ted Fields.

18 MR. ACCETTOLA: Ted.

19 MR. FIELDS: Yes.

20 MR. ACCETTOLA: Thank God you spoke because
21 it makes it a lot easier for me. We're in 100 percent
22 agreement and thank you. It takes a lot off of my
23 timeframe, and I'll get off of here quickly. I'm a
24 resident in Battery Park at the Ritz Carlton, and I
25 often go over there and see an awful lot of criminal

1 activity via licensed vendors, via unlicensed vendors.
2 There's one character that dresses up in a uniform as
3 if he's a parking or some type of official, and he
4 pulls over cars on West Street. There's cars being
5 pulled over by at least five or six vendors daily on
6 West Street, pulled over, and I overhear the
7 statements where they make the exact statements
8 that -- false statements that the other gentleman from
9 Statue Cruises has said -- that they do stop at Statue
10 of Liberty, and then they laugh after they get the
11 money from the people. And what happens is they say
12 there's no refunds.

13 And the police actually have spoken to me,
14 and they said off the record -- I have a extensive
15 police background. I was former chief federal
16 administrator in New York City Housing Police
17 Department, and the most -- I have a lett here from
18 the chief stating that I was the most influential
19 person in the City of New York when it came to crime
20 and public housing.

21 I have been trying for the past six months
22 to get in contact with the politicians, and I don't
23 get responses. I've been trying to get in contact
24 with Katherine Phan, who did a story on it. I don't
25 get responses, and I've reached out on several

1 occasions to the commanding officer of the first
2 precinct, and I don't get phone callbacks.

3 I think that that's a disgrace. I think
4 it's, it's something that has to be addressed, and I
5 hope that DCA could reach out for me and say, could
6 you politicians follow the law and respond to
7 citizens? Thank you.

8 MR. ORTIZ: Felix Vicioso.

9 MR. FELIX VICIOSO: Good morning, good
10 morning.

11 MR. ORTIZ: Good morning.

12 MR. VICIOSO: My name is Felix Vicioso. I
13 have basically been in tourism for about 15 years,
14 since about maybe 2005. I worked for the helicopters.
15 I've worked for the buses. I've been around. I enjoy
16 my job. It's a choice of mine. It help me to
17 provide -- I'm alone here in New York City. My
18 parents are retired in Dominican Republic. I live in
19 Queens. It's v-, you know, it's very hard for me to
20 provide every month and, you know, food and
21 everything.

22 I haven't been working for three weeks due
23 to the fact that this situation happened. I've
24 worked -- like I said, a lot of people have known me.
25 I've never ever, ever had any issues with the, the,

1 the authorities down there. Everybody that knows me
2 knows I'm very hardworking. I'm very straightforward.
3 I always give two options. Whatever they want to do,
4 you know? If they want to come with me, they come
5 with me. If they don't, they don't. But due to the
6 situation, like I said, I haven't worked in three
7 weeks. I just want to go to work. You know? That's
8 basically what I want to do.

9 I've known Lester for a long time. I was a
10 ticket agent with him, and for him to be where he is
11 now, it's a inspiration to me. You know? I want to
12 be like that one day. You know? And, and, and it's
13 kind of hard to see this, you know, that when we're
14 here in a, in a room discussing the future of this
15 boat business and basically, I just want to get back
16 in track, and I hope everybody, you know, lifts the,
17 the, the ban. That's it.

18 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you.

19 MR. VICIOSO: Thank you.

20 MR. ORTIZ: Li Zhen Wan?

21 MS. LI ZHEN WAN: Hi, how are you? Good
22 morning, anybody. I just working for the
23 [unintelligible] [00:29:06] ticket, but the others --
24 my English is not very good, but I just
25 [unintelligible] [00:29:11] anybody can understand. I

1 have a desk job. It's very good, but [unintelligible]
2 [00:29:16] working in the, like, the agent or some-
3 something is a good, some agents not good. But there
4 is lie to people [unintelligible] [00:29:23] follow me
5 [unintelligible] [00:29:24] what happen. But is not
6 for the my company the ticket, but it's still the
7 company me.

8 But right now, it is stop so my
9 [unintelligible] [00:29:31] Pier 36, but
10 [unintelligible] [00:29:33] that guy steals a work.
11 That has still is a uniform, is a -- same thing is do
12 the my uniform to the outside the work. So I don't
13 know is a very [unintelligible] [00:29:41] understand
14 so [unintelligible] [00:29:43] work [unintelligible]
15 [00:29:44] not work. So I want to make sure anybody
16 can do the [unintelligible] [00:29:49] the looking for
17 that has a li-, we got have the license, but then is
18 we follow the law is not work. That guy is not car
19 for anyone. He want to go sell the ticket, but we
20 still need to sell ticket. We need to the family need
21 to feel too. So I want try [unintelligible]
22 [00:30:05] can understand so [unintelligible]
23 [00:30:07] to open the pier for us.

24 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Totally understand.

25 MS. WAN: Thank you.

1 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you.

2 MR. COREY LASHLEY: Hi, Corey Lashley.

3 MR. ORTIZ: We -- you were already called,
4 sir, so we'll have to call you again at the end of the
5 hour.

6 MR. LAHSER: Okay, sorry. Sorry. I was
7 trying to find parking.

8 MR. ORTIZ: Anthony Malone.

9 MR. ANTHONY MALONE: Hello, my name is
10 Anthony Malone. I'm director of operations of Pier A,
11 Harbor Heights and Battery Park. We support the new
12 rules that the DCA is planning to implement for ticket
13 vendors. I also concur with, with most everything
14 I've heard today regarding some of the issues that
15 exist in Battery Park and particularly in the, in the
16 Pier A area with some vendors -- some not all vendors
17 it's important to say.

18 We're kind of on the front line of this. I,
19 I, I probably spend as much face time with ticket
20 vendors as anyone in this room just being there seven
21 days a week. And although the rules that are proposed
22 are positive and hope it can be effective, I think
23 accountability to the activities of vendors is the
24 most important part. I see numerous vendors in the
25 park and I -- we have no idea who they work for,

1 whose tickets they're selling. It's confusing.
2 It's -- again, if I saw s-, a vendor do something bad,
3 I, I don't know who to talk to. I don't know who to
4 approach. I don't know whose company to, to, to tell
5 about that.

6 So I would love a situation where there is
7 more accountability to the vendors, that the owners of
8 the companies reach out, make themselves known, manage
9 their teams, and again, in dealing with local
10 businesses and local residents, you know, put in place
11 a level of accountability for their actions and
12 activities. And when they're breaking DCA rules,
13 which happens multiple times daily, to have a way for
14 us to, to help the owners enforce this and to make the
15 experience in Battery Park for tourists better overall
16 because right now, the average visitor doesn't have a
17 very positive experience visiting Battery Park. Thank
18 you.

19 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you, sir. Just -- I know
20 we had a few more people walk in. We had a full house
21 today. If, if you plan to testify, please remember to
22 sign in at the, at the sign-in sheet over here and
23 pick up a registration card and fill it out and give
24 it to me. I'm calling people by the cards that I have
25 in front of me. And it's also for -- to make sure

1 you're noted in the record as well. So I think this
2 is Morris Bez, Morris Bey. Is that -- Malik. Sorry,
3 Malik.

4 MR. ACCETTOLA: So everyone in attendance
5 that signed in will be in the record, noted in the
6 record today?

7 MR. ORTIZ: Everyone who's testifying will
8 be noted.

9 MR. ACCETTOLA: Everyone that's testified,
10 okay, 'cause I don't see any politicians
11 [unintelligible] [00:33:15].

12 MR. MALIK BEY: Good morning, everyone. My
13 name is Malik Bey. I'm not gonna keep your time for
14 very long. I am a ticket agent currently working
15 around Batter Park. All I would like to say is that
16 this has been a very good job as far as providing for
17 myself and my family, and every -- with all due
18 respect, everybody is here. Everybody is basically
19 working towards a better future for whatever their,
20 their operations are. All right?

21 We as ticket agents have went through
22 getting a ticket agent license to properly sell around
23 in the Battery Park area. Before also it was -- it's
24 not -- it's, it's, it's supposed to be expressive
25 matter vending. But then we didn't need a license

1 before, but then we currently need one. Then we got
2 one. I don't know if it's doesn't still qualify as
3 that, but that's [unintelligible] [00:34:15] it's not
4 for me to -- that's for us to figure out together.

5 All I would like to say is that I think it
6 is wrong that we are all bunched in together as one
7 because we are not all one. There's many different
8 companies there. Some are misrepresented. Some are
9 represented the right way. Some are doing the right
10 thing. Some aren't doing the right thing, but I feel
11 like for one thing for sure is if you have a ticket
12 seller's license, if you are paying taxes, if you are
13 approached by someone or are approaching people and
14 you carry yourself with proper respect and give them
15 the right information, you shouldn't be going through
16 what we're going through right now. You understand?

17 And that's pretty much -- also I don't
18 understand. Like I've heard the gentleman come up
19 here from Statue Cruises, that represents Statue
20 Cruises, and say that they sell basically a bogus boat
21 that doesn't exist. He just -- it just sounded like
22 he was saying it. It's like -- no. We -- if we were
23 selling a ticket to someone or explaining to them
24 about the ticket, it's going to be about a ride that
25 they're gonna actually receive.

1 If we were selling a boat that no one was
2 receiving, we probably wouldn't even be here. It
3 would be a lot worse than it is right now. People are
4 receiving what they pay for. Now, as far as is it
5 worth what they're paying for? That's for them to
6 decide. That's not for you to decide. But, you know,
7 that's all I'd like to say. I don't want to say too
8 much. Have a good day, everyone.

9 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Tim Berton.

10 MR. TIM BERTON: I'm a, I'm a boat operator
11 in, in Battery Park, and we operate -- we have a
12 license to operate, a permit, and we've seen our
13 numbers of, of, of visitors go down dramatically
14 because there's hundreds of people standing outside.
15 As people are trying to walk into the park, they're
16 being misdirected or redirected and, and approached
17 and harassed. And, and maybe it's not everybody.
18 Maybe some people are doing it very respectfully, but
19 the net effect is that it's driving business that was
20 showing up to a specific location, and a lot of
21 investment goes into that.

22 No -- absolutely understand everybody needs
23 to eat and everybody needs to provide for their
24 families and, and, and I'm not a large company, but I
25 have employees. And, and we've seen our ticket

1 revenues drop, I think, 30 percent this year, of
2 our -- last year and this year combined, 30 percent.
3 And I, I relate it directly to, to the street teams
4 outside the park. And it's hard, and I don't have a
5 solution, but it's, it's definitely damaging our
6 business and our ability to operate and be profitable.
7 And they're sending people away. I don't know what to
8 say.

9 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you for testimony. Travis
10 Noyes.

11 MR. TRAVIS NOYES: Hi, I'm Travis Noyes.
12 I'm the Chairman of Destination St. George, which
13 consists of the 25 cultural institutions on the North
14 Shore of Staten Island. Our members include the
15 Staten Island Yankees, Snug Harbor, Staten Island
16 Museum, Lighthouse Museum, Alice Austin House, and the
17 Noble Maritime Collection. I'm here today in support
18 of the proposed DCA rules changes. The State Island
19 Ferry is the primary entrance to our borough. No
20 other borough has so few transportation options to it.
21 We have undergone a billion-dollar redevelopment of
22 North Shore waterfront and collectively employed
23 thousands of Staten Island residents.

24 Both tourists and locals alike are
25 confronted daily with dozens of agents illegally

1 selling tickets on park property directly in front of
2 Whitehall terminal, and that's specifically what I'm,
3 you know, here today to address. You know, anything
4 that's happening legally or within DCA rules, you
5 know, is perfectly fine with us. We receive daily
6 feedback from our visitors about misinformation given
7 to our visitors that the Staten Island Ferry doesn't
8 have views of the Statue of Liberty, that visitors
9 will have to wait an hour on the other side, and that
10 the ferry costs money to ride.

11 We ask that the DCA and the City of New York
12 protect the entrance to Staten Island, ensure that our
13 residents and visitors have an enjoyable and ob-,
14 unobstructed journey. Thank you.

15 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. At this time, I'd
16 like to recall Corey Lashley. Call for testimony.

17 MR. LASHLEY: How you guys doing? My name
18 is Corey Lashley. I was the origin -- when we started
19 the ticket agents business years ago, I was the very
20 first person that came down here with an idea to be
21 able to establish a business for those unfortunate
22 [unintelligible] [00:39:10] that couldn't get jobs.
23 And what happened was that I was a part of the Skyline
24 decision as well. Once the Skyline decision came out,
25 the Parks Department issued new rules to their own

1 rules and regulations to imply -- to, to, to include
2 the ticket agents on the side of the park.

3 Now, now once we started abiding by their
4 rules and regulations -- you know, you have good; you
5 have bad in all situations. And I'm looking at the
6 rule that you guys want to imply. That's like you
7 telling me. You're saying I work for McDonald's, but
8 you got -- I have to tell you to go buy your food at
9 Burger King. Why should I tell you something about
10 Burger King if I work for McDonald's?

11 I own a company called 1012 Ventures
12 Partners Inc, and my boat goes around the island. And
13 why would I tell them something about Statue Cruises?
14 That's not my business. I don't own that business.
15 If they ask me about it, you can go that way. That's
16 not my business. But my agents are being taught not
17 to lie, to tell them the truth. You have the option
18 either to go on the ground or around the island. If
19 you choose to go on the ground, you go about your
20 business. If you want to go around the island, then
21 it's my job and my agents to explain it.

22 And for -- and if you just look at -- just
23 look at it, and I don't really want to, want to press
24 the issue, but it's a race issue. You don't want to
25 eat that. You don't want to bite that. You don't

1 want to say it, but it's a race issue. Everybody that
2 owns the boat company or bus company that is white are
3 not being attacked. Only the black owners are being
4 attacked. This is a fact. We have videos, thousands
5 and thousands of videos. When they come and speak to
6 us, they speak to that agents that own the black-owned
7 company. White-owned companies are standing right
8 there doing the exact same thing, and they're not
9 messing with them. No one wants to confront that.
10 And this is a fact.

11 Black-owned companies are being ran out of
12 the park by white-owned companies, and the police are
13 being directed -- they tell us they're being directed
14 to get rid of the ticket agent street agents. And
15 these are black-owned businesses. And this is wrong,
16 and the laws that you guys want to make, how can you
17 tell me that I'm supposed to tell you about a free
18 boat? How can I sell my boat? Why would I want to s-
19 , why would I want to tell you about a free boat when
20 I'm trying to sell my boat?

21 If I work at McDonald's and they're giving
22 out free food down the block and you come into
23 McDonald's and I say no, they got a free food down the
24 block, go down there. That's my business. Why would
25 I tell them about free food? It doesn't make any

1 sense. You say that your revenue's going down. Of
2 course it's going down because you have a competitor.
3 Of course this is what happens in business. You have
4 people that sell tickets. This is what we do, not
5 nothing directly towards you. I'm just speaking in
6 general about individual businesses going down. Of
7 course. You had -- this is the problem.

8 MR. ORTIZ: Time.

9 MR. LASHLEY: We're losing our money.
10 They're losing their money, we're getting the money,
11 and now you want to run us out because we're getting
12 it. It isn't right [unintelligible] [00:42:28] wrong.

13 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you, sir. Office of
14 Manhattan, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer.

15 MR. MATTHEW WASHINGTON: Good morning, my
16 name is Matthew Washington, Deputy Manhattan Borough
17 President, for Manhattan Borough President Gale
18 Brewer. Sorry to disappoint. There's a politician in
19 the house. I want to say to my --

20 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: That not just
21 [unintelligible] [00:42:52] politician.

22 MR. WASHINGTON: I want to say to my
23 brother, as you can see, I eat both McDonald's and
24 Burger King, so -- I just want to say that on behalf
25 of Manhattan Borough President's Office, we do support

1 the rule changes that the Department of Consumer
2 Affairs is discussing related to information about
3 products. Certainly putting on the tickets that these
4 vessels are not stopping at Ellis or Liberty Island we
5 think is important. We think it's also important to
6 identify in marketing materials that these products
7 are not stopping at Ellis or Liberty Island.

8 We recognize that there are good actors in
9 the industry, and we want to do what we can to protect
10 those who are working hard within the industry to sell
11 products legally. Just like in every industry, we
12 want to ensure that those who are acting
13 inappropriately or out of bounds are addressed
14 specifically. Additionally, the fee schedule for
15 ticket sellers, we think the individual ticket seller,
16 it's not impo-, it's important to fine the ticket
17 seller but also the company that they work for.

18 There have to be good practices instilled by
19 leadership, and so we would like to see a fee schedule
20 of what these infractions imposed on the companies
21 that hire the individuals who are selling these
22 tickets. It's not enough to fine an individual ticket
23 seller. They will go out. Somebody else will come
24 in, but good ticket selling companies have
25 accountability, will maintain accountability, and need

1 to maintain accountability. So there must be
2 accountability for each of those ticket sellers to
3 their companies and the company -- a company fee
4 schedule, we believe, should be implemented.

5 Additionally the marketing materials the
6 Department of Consumer Affairs has, there is a tips
7 for tourists guide. We think that there could be some
8 updates in there that talk about some of these issues
9 that we've been having specifically around the Battery
10 with ticket sales and how to protect yourself. Some
11 people just don't understand or are confused.

12 Additionally with a lot of the marketing
13 materials, we think it's important to have a label.
14 You know when we look at cigarettes, there's a big
15 warning label that tells you about the hazards of
16 smoking, we think a label not talking about the
17 hazards but identifying that these products are not
18 stopping. You can have a wonderful experience not
19 going to the islands directly and going past them if
20 you choose. We just want to make sure all the
21 information is out there so customers know exactly
22 what they're getting, when they're getting, and we
23 want to create a safe, healthy environment for
24 everyone, get the bad actors out appropriately, and
25 those who are doing the right thing within the law

1 should be allowed to continue doing what they're
2 doing. Thank you very much.

3 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you.

4 [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]

5 MR. ORTIZ: Can I please call up James
6 Crawford? James Crawford.

7 MR. JAMES CRAWFORD: How you doing?

8 MR. ORTIZ: Good, how are you?

9 MR. CRAWFORD: I just wanted to speak about
10 some of things we go through. I'm one of the original
11 ticket sellers that came down with Mr. Lashley when we
12 first started this. And the climate that's out here
13 was--

14 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Could you speak up a
15 little bit?

16 MR. CRAWFORD: The climate that you guys
17 see, the, the aggressiveness and all that, that was
18 brought about by false advertisement of the police,
19 and everyone has been fighting against us. They're
20 hanging signs. They're giving out fraud alert
21 brochures. They've made us go get a license, but they
22 tell the customers we selling fake tickets. They go
23 on our buses, empty the buses out, make the customers
24 get refunds. This is what we go through every day.

25 So even the people who are not on the park

1 side that are the selling tickets are being forced to
2 give these customers refunds because the officers are
3 going on our shuttle buses and making 'em go get
4 refunds. It's ridiculous. Then we apply for a
5 license in September. We don't hear back from the
6 office until March. So how can we effectively have
7 our agents licensed and properly out there if we can't
8 even get the license?

9 And if a agent has a criminal record, they
10 get the runaround. Go get all of your indictments.
11 You got all of that in your system because when you
12 send a denial, you list it. So why does he have to go
13 to court and get all of this paperwork? For what? It
14 don't make sense. It don't make sense.

15 So all of this stuff the police are doing,
16 they're creating this environment. They're the ones
17 that's hanging signs and selling the tourists that
18 we're scammers. They created this environment.
19 That's why it's like it is. It wasn't like this seven
20 years ago. You never heard a tourist complain about
21 our tours seven years ago.

22 It's incident after incident and it's lie
23 after lie. It's lie after lie. We had a incident I'm
24 sure you'll recall, the tourist that got a skull
25 fracture. Right? How come they didn't post a video?

1 Everyone listened to Officer Feldman. Officer Feldman
2 said what he said. It's printed in the paper as
3 truth. Nobody looked at the video of this tourist
4 smacking that ticket agent's wife cigarette out of her
5 mouth, which caused him to get his skull fractured.
6 Nobody's gonna stand around and watch somebody slap
7 their wife. Go get that video and post that.

8 It's ridiculous. Every time something
9 happen, it's from something that happened. It's a
10 reaction. Ticket agents just don't go assault
11 tourists. We don't do that. We come out here to make
12 money.

13 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you.

14 MR. CRAWFORD: We selling tickets to the
15 Staten Island Ferry. If we sell you a ticket for the
16 one-hour tour, right, and you go in the Staten Island
17 Ferry by mistake, how does that get printed that you
18 sold them a \$400 ticket--

19 MR. ORTIZ: Sir, I'm gonna call the next
20 witness.

21 MR. CRAWFORD: --to the Staten Island Ferry?

22 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you for your testimony.

23 MR. CRAWFORD: Stop printing lies all day.

24 MR. ORTIZ: Can I please call Atanda
25 Adekumle? No? Okay. I'm -- are there any further

1 folks that would like to testify today? I don't have
2 any more, any more -- please come up and state your
3 name for the record, and then you can fill this out
4 after and give it to me. You have three minutes.

5 MR. GREGORY REDDICK: Good morning. My name
6 is Gregory Reddick. I start off with Corey Lashley,
7 part of the Skyline decision. Six years ago, we came
8 down here, and we were actually working for your
9 company, Statue Cruises. What happened was that you
10 guys raised the product and lowered the actual
11 commission. So we got our own company. It was no
12 problem. We gave y'all \$6 million. Wasn't a problem.
13 Okay?

14 And I'm the one they put on the front page
15 of the posts -- sold a ticket to Staten Island Ferry
16 for \$400. It never happened. You go to 100
17 [unintelligible] [00:50:24] street. I was never
18 arrested for it. Okay? I was arrested that day for
19 disorderly conduct. So everything that's going on
20 'round here is lies. You don't print when we save
21 these people kids. Within 12 months, 600 kids get
22 lost in that park while we down there, and we find
23 every last one of 'em. All right?

24 We need to work together because we're not
25 leaving, number one. Now, our boat's been d-, shut

1 down for about a month. You go outside right now, you
2 see ticket agents have nothing to do with us. So if
3 you're gon' implement these new rules, implement 'em.
4 Keep it 100 for everybody. Let the cops know to leave
5 us alone 'cause 99 percent of the tickets that they
6 write, DCA, they dismiss. Okay? You know it.
7 Everybody here know it. The judge looking at y'all
8 like you crazy. Like, what this guy here for? And
9 NYPD's criminal court, they dismiss it too.

10 That's -- we just want to make money, man.
11 That's all it is. We pay our taxes. That's it. Have
12 a nice day.

13 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you, sir. Please fill
14 that out, please. I'd like to call Ibrahima Konate.

15 MR. IBRAHIMA KONATE: Good morning,
16 everyone. I'm very sorry about my heavy English. I'm
17 from a French country. Just want to mention two
18 point. The first point, I start working with the New
19 York Tourism in 2013 [unintelligible] [00:52:04] Upper
20 Loop Tour. That's run out of business. I was a
21 supervisor. I been in this room before with my agent.
22 They [unintelligible] [00:52:15] the license for the
23 first time in New York City.

24 I just to address my point to do -- those
25 two companies that I just heard right now, is the

1 Staten Island representative and the [unintelligible]
2 [00:52:36] representative. We -- as a ticket agent
3 in Times Square, those two companies hold us as a
4 agent in Battery Park, they hold us a lot of, lot
5 of -- how to say it? They hold us a lot of
6 [unintelligible] [00:52:57]. Why? Lot of the agent
7 sell the sightseeing, Gray Line, Big Bus in Times
8 Square.

9 I don't know why those people didn't have
10 complain about these people here. They sell ticket
11 in Times Square. They want to just make them, when
12 they sell you bus with no boat and tell you that you
13 got a free boat that's take you to Statue of Liberty
14 and that [unintelligible] [00:53:24] Staten Island.
15 And you guys know the Staten Island Ferry doesn't go
16 over there. But that lies is acceptable for those
17 people. But us, we're here.

18 The Hornblower people use -- they sell --
19 they buy ticket online from London, UK, wherever in
20 the world and come to Staten Island.
21 [unintelligible] [00:53:47] they see people run and
22 go into Staten Island. They have their own ticket,
23 and they run, follow them and go there. Who helping
24 them? You guys have agent there to direct them to
25 the park? If yes, we are there. We are the one who

1 take that responsibility [unintelligible] [00:54:02].
2 Excuse me. What ticket do you have? City Bus, New
3 York bus, [unintelligible] [00:54:07] Statue Cruise?
4 Yes. Okay, you have to go to the park. This way.
5 What ticket do you have? No, I don't have none.

6 Okay. You got three -- two options. You
7 got the free ferry here going to Staten Island. It
8 just passing by. You no going around. You, you're
9 not being too close. And you got Statue of Liberty.
10 If you want to get off, straight to the park. But if
11 you don't have enough, then you got one-hour express
12 tour. So it's up to you what you want to do. You
13 know, I don't have enough time, man. I want to do
14 the one now. Okay, you come with me. And they
15 follow us. We show them every single thing. You no
16 getting off the boat. Of course is lot of
17 inconvenience everywhere.

18 MR. ORTIZ: That's time.

19 MR. KONATE: you know? All right, sorry.

20 MR. ORTIZ: No, thank you. Thank you for
21 your testimony. Are there additional folks that want
22 to testify? And please, if so, come up and hand me
23 your registration card. Please say your name for the
24 record, and you have three minutes.

25 MR. ALIMAME SUWAREH: All right. Good

1 morning, guys. My name is Alimame Suwareh. I'm also
2 a ticket agent with the New York Iconic Cruise.

3 MR. ORTIZ: If we could have a little bit of
4 quiet here so he can testify.

5 MR. SUWAREH: I've been doing this job for
6 quite a long. I was working in the [unintelligible]
7 [00:55:24] company. Then I went to Empire State
8 Building and I work in there. Then after, when that
9 close then we come to the Battery Park here. So we
10 working smoothly with everybody here, and even the
11 people [unintelligible] [00:55:34] 'cause we are very
12 much useful to [unintelligible] [00:55:37]. We are
13 in [unintelligible] [00:55:38] showing them direction
14 on all the stars.

15 And also I want to -- I don't know actually
16 the real reason why maybe all the products
17 [unintelligible] [00:55:46] are coming about, but I
18 think we can work out a best way how we can work with
19 the [unintelligible] [00:55:51] people
20 [unintelligible] [00:55:51] and the tourists, how we
21 can have a smooth relationship that we can all work
22 together, everybody make your thing, everybody get
23 your money in a very good way, in a very conducive
24 environment.

25 And also with regards -- one of the girl

1 make a comment here about the percen-, I just even
2 Google it right now. I knew about it, but I even
3 just Google it again to confirm whether I'm right or
4 not, but it's about the percentage of the tourist
5 that are coming to America. That has been down. The
6 percentage is down. I just [unintelligible]
7 [00:56:17] 1.6 percent. So if you put that regard to
8 the 30 percent the guy is talking about, it's gonna
9 be probably from the -- not even we causing them to
10 lose that amount of percentage. You know?

11 I think all -- but all this [unintelligible]
12 [00:56:30] my whole point is, it's all about a tactic
13 of monopoly, that they just want to kick us out so
14 that somebody can just monopolize everything and take
15 it all. So I think we are here to -- you guys are
16 here of concern that we are also family members. We
17 have responsibilities. That -- you know, you give us
18 the leeway so we can all work together smoothly,
19 conducively. We have a good relationship. We have
20 good guidelines so everybody can start making your
21 own money and you'll be living happily in a together
22 [unintelligible] [00:56:56]. Thank you guys who are
23 here.

24 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Would you mind
25 filling this out, please? I'd like to call Raji

1 Mohamadu.

2 MR. RAJI MOHAMADU: Hello, everybody. I'm
3 Raji Mahamadu. Actually, I think everything's
4 already been said, and I have a little bit thing to
5 talk about. The price issue. I remember I started
6 working three years back in Battery Park, and we used
7 to sell the Hornblower when I started. We sell the
8 Hornblower, which was \$30. Comparing the price
9 issue, Statue Cruises is \$18.50. When you go online,
10 Statue Cruises is \$18.50. And there's a Liberty
11 Cruise -- sorry, I think Liberty Cruise, which is
12 like \$25--

13 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Statue of Liberty
14 ticket.

15 MR. MOHAMADU: Statue of Liberty ticket,
16 which is \$25, \$25.50 online. And now we have the
17 Circle Line, which is \$35, and nobody complain about
18 that. So if we choose to sell our product for \$35, I
19 don't think it should be any concern. These
20 tourists, most of them want to go around because
21 sometime they [unintelligible] [00:58:02] but they
22 come, and you can see a lot of people, people waiting
23 the line for more than four hours, and they never
24 been told that you're gonna wait for four hours.
25 Nobody tell them that.

1 So the same thing apply to everybody. Once
2 you buy the product and it's too many people, you
3 just have to wait. If you don't want to do it, you
4 just get a refund. So if you guys want to bring a
5 laws, a rules, which we all gonna work together, I
6 think that's gonna make sense and just kick all of us
7 out from there. So think that's all I have to say
8 for no. Thank you, everybody.

9 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Can I please call
10 Ilham? Can you state your full name for the record,
11 please?

12 MS. ILHAM SALBAT: Ilham Salbat. Hey, guys.
13 My name is Ilham. I've been in this industry for
14 quite a while. I started as a ticket agent, then a
15 tour guide. Then I became a supervisor in one of the
16 double decker bus tours, then went back and be a
17 ticket agent. So I don't have much to say because I
18 think that my colleagues here, they said, they said
19 it all. I just want you to know that we're here
20 helping the tourists with, like my friend said, the,
21 the -- with directions, with their tickets sometimes.

22 People get from all, all over the countries.
23 They don't even speak English, and we're here. Most
24 of us speaks more than one language. We help them
25 with the directions. We help them knowing about

1 mostly downtown since we work here, the area. We're
2 not trying to scam them or trying to steal their
3 money. We give them the choice. Always there is a
4 choice. Is either they want to do the -- to get off
5 on the island, and that's the price of it. Or most
6 of them, they have just, like, couple hours in the
7 city, and they just want to do an express tour.
8 That's when we present them our service. That's all
9 I have to say. Thank you.

10 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you for your testimony.
11 Is there anyone else that wants to testify? Please
12 state your name for the record.

13 MR. YANG GAO: Hi, everybody. My name is
14 Yang Gao. I'm a new boat operator that operates out
15 of Pier 36. I just want to make a small point on the
16 record is that we're merely providing a service
17 that's needed. We provide a boat tour that comes out
18 and back in, in an hour, where they get to see the
19 Statue of Liberty, where they get to see the Brooklyn
20 Bridge, the Williamsburg Bridge, where they get to
21 see the New York skyline, the, the, the Wall Street
22 skyline. So it is a service that people don't have
23 to wait that long for, and if customers want to do
24 it, they have a choice.

25 So everything else has been spoken for by

1 the ticket agents. I understand what they're saying,
2 but we're merely just providing a service, and we're
3 being punished for something that's perfectly legal
4 to do. So, you know, we just want to get back open.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you for your testimony.

7 MR. GAO: Oh, thank, thank you.

8 MR. ORTIZ: Can you fill out your
9 information?

10 MR. GAO: Sure.

11 MR. ORTIZ: Is anyone else planning to
12 testify today? We've already had, we've already had
13 your testimony, sir.

14 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I know. It's two
15 seconds. Just--

16 MR. ORTIZ: You can also submit written
17 comments, and it can be as long as you want, and we
18 also take those under consideration.

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I hear you, sir.

20 MR. ORTIZ: We, we submit, we submit -- you
21 can submit written comments as well, and those can be
22 as long as you want. There's no limit on the length
23 of written comments.

24 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I just want to say this
25 one thing. Just one thing.

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MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. Is anybody else planning to comment today?

UNDIDENTIFIED MALE: I spoke before. Can I --

MR. ORTIZ: No, I think we're, we're limiting to one comment period per person. All right. Well, well, thank you very much for attending. We're past the hour now, and I'd like to adjourn this hearing. Thank you.

CERTIFICATE OF ACCURACY

I, Ryan Manaloto, certify that the foregoing transcript of Proposed Rules Governing Ticket Sellers on September 16, 2019 was prepared using the required transcription equipment and is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Certified By



Date: October 3, 2019

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