1 ----X 2 NEW YORK CITY 3 TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION 4 PUBLIC HEARING 5 ----Х 6 January 22, 2025 10:01 a.m. 7 8 9 PUBLIC HEARING 10 Held 11 Virtually Via Zoom 12 13 BEFORE: 14 COMMISSIONER AND CHAIR 15 DAVID DO 16 GENERAL COUNSEL SHERRYL ELUTO 17 18 19 20 21 22 Court Reporter Stephanie O'Keeffe 23 24 25

## In Re NYC - Taxi & Limousine Commission Public Hearing January 22, 2025

A P P E A R A N C E S : COMMISSIONER/CHAIR DAVID DO GENERAL COUNSEL - SHERRYL ELUTO б BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: COMMISSIONER PAUL BADER COMMISSIONER THOMAS SORRENTINO COMMISSIONER KENNETH C. MITCHELL COMMISSIONER ELISA VALAZQUEZ COMMISSIONER SARAH KAUFMAN 

### PROCEEDINGS 1 MODERATOR: -- in Zoom meeting when you 2 signed up to speak, this will enable the 3 moderator to confirm that you are present in the meeting. 4 5 Closed captioning is available for today's meeting. Thank you for your attention. б 7 I will now yield the floor to our Commission and chair David Do. 8 9 CHAIR DO: Good morning. Welcome to 10 today's public hearing on TLC's proposed rules on accessible taxicab E-hail service. 11 I am Commissioner David Do, and I am 12 13 joined today by Commissioners Mitchell, Valazquez, Kaufman, and Bader. 14 15 I hope everyone had a restful long 16 weekend, and I hope drivers out there were 17 working. I hope that January has been an 18 incredibly good month. 19 Increasing trip options specifically, options for people requesting 20 21 wheelchair-accessible taxicabs is why we are 22 here today. Two weeks ago, we heard comments 23 about TLC's rule proposal to increase upfront 24 payments from the Taxi Improvement Fund, or 25 TIF, to help medallion owners convert to

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1	wheelchair-accessible vehicles.
2	We are under a federal court order to
3	convert fifty percent of the active taxi fleet
4	the Waave by March, that's
5	wheelchair-accessible vehicles by March, and
6	all new hack-ups must be wheelchair accessible
7	until we reach that goal post. We are
8	committed to doing exactly that.
9	At the same hearing, we saw a presentation
10	from Deputy Commissioner Hines, illustrating
11	how TIF will become insolvent unless we make
12	adjustments. One adjustment we made to both
13	improve accessibility and keep the TIF moneys
14	moving, is to streamline our Accessible
15	Dispatch program, which is part of the rule
16	package we are discussing today.
17	Let me be clear that a call option, a $24/7$
18	call option with training for that staff is
19	part of this rule package. We are going to
20	require that by rule for the E-hail providers.
21	And to walk us through the specifics of that is
22	Cindi Davidson, our assistant commissioner for
23	program planning and management, to give us a
24	presentation on what that means, and what the
25	proposed changes are.

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1	Cindi.
2	MS. DAVIDSON: Thank you very much,
3	Commissioner Do, and good morning,
4	Commissioners.
5	I will share my screen shortly.
б	(Whereupon, Ms. Davidson shared
7	her screen for all to view.)
8	Thank you, Commissioner Do, again, and
9	good morning Commissioners. My name is Cindi
10	Davidson, and I serve as the assistant
11	commissioner of program planning and management
12	in the division of operations people and
13	innovation.
14	Today, I will go over the proposed rules
15	that will transform Accessible Dispatch service
16	from a single-provider model to a
17	multi-provider, serviced by TLC licensed E-hail
18	apps, similar to how accessible service is
19	provided in the FHV sector. PI will also
20	describe each slide in the presentation.
21	So this slide is the title slide, proposed
22	accessible E-hail rules, expanding Accessible
23	Dispatch options, and I have listed TLC and my
24	name.
25	The next slide is a slide of text, and

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PROCEEDINGS 1 it's about the Accessible Dispatch program's 2 new approach. 3 First, Accessible Dispatch lets customers 4 request a wheelchair-accessible taxi anywhere 5 in the City. The original, Manhattan-only program launched citywide service in 2018. б Ι 7 will go over the history of Accessible Dispatch 8 later on in the presentation. For the new approach, TLC is planning to 9 10 move away from a single-contract model to a 11 program that is serviced by multiple TLC 12 licensed E-hail app providers. Our goal is to 13 provide easy to use and reliable access to wheelchair-accessible taxis or Waaves for 14 15 people with disabilities and low mobility, 16 similar to the FHV Waave model. Under the 17 proposed approach, customers can select the 18 E-hail app provider of their choice to request 19 a wheelchair-accessible taxi as they do today. 20 The proposed rules would also require TLC 21 licensed E-hail apps to offer a call option as 22 well. 23 Now, the City is in a much different 24 place, compared to when Accessible Dispatch 25 started providing citywide service in 2018.

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1	Both the number of wheelchair-accessible
2	vehicles on the road has increased and ways to
3	get one have improved since the citywide
4	Accessible Dispatch program started seven years
5	ago.
6	On the next slide, accessible services
7	that are available citywide. There are two
8	images, on the left is a yellow taxi and on the
9	right is a picture of a for-hire
10	wheelchair-accessible vehicle and then below
11	each, I list matrix about all of the different
12	programs.
13	Now, the purpose of today's hearing is to
14	go over the proposed changes to the Accessible
15	Dispatch and E-hail programs. However, I want
16	to take a moment to go over all the ways
17	customers can request a wheelchair-accessible
18	vehicle.
19	Today, there are over 4,100 taxis, and
20	that will continue to grow, 7,500 for-hire
21	vehicles for a total of 11,600 vehicles that
22	are accessible, and, more importantly, they are
23	available to customers who need them.
24	If you need an accessible taxi, you can
25	hail one on the street; however, we know other

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1options are needed as well. Today, you can2request a wheelchair-accessible taxi through3Accessible Dispatch or E-hail apps such as4Curb, Arrow, or Myle. Accessible Dispatch5provides over 5,500 trips per month, and E-hail6apps provide 2,000 trips per month.7TLC licensed E-hail apps enable customers8to request a taxi via a smartphone app. These9apps are similar to high-volume FHV providers,10such as Uber and Lyft, but they have a11completely different regulatory structure and12only operate in the taxi space.13In the FHV sector, there are two different14ways high-volume and traditional car services15provide accessible service. A small share of16bases have their own fleet of17wheelchair-accessible vehicles and service18their own trips; however, the majority of19bases, including high-volume FHVs, contract20with a TLC authorized FHV Waave dispatcher21under the Central Dispatch program. Uber and22Lyft are authorized FHV Waave dispatchers.23Under the FHV Waave program, over 50,00024trips are provide each month citywide, and, as25you may recall, the Commission recently		PROCEEDINGS
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24 trips are provided each month citywide, and, as	22	Lyft are authorized FHV Waave dispatchers.
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25 you may recall, the Commission recently	24	trips are provided each month citywide, and, as
	25	you may recall, the Commission recently

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proposed rules that would require ninety percent of trips to be serviced in ten minutes or less citywide.

At its peak, in May 2019, Accessible Dispatch provided 9,000 trips per month. Today, there are 62,500 trips per month across all sectors that were specifically requested by a customer who wanted a wheelchair-accessible vehicle. To put it in perspective, that means there were over 50,000 trips in un-met demand that left customers stuck or stranded each month prior to the FHV program. This is really dependable across all sectors, and it has transformed lives.

The next slide is the history of Accessible Dispatch, and it lists various points, which I'm going to talk about now regarding how Accessible Dispatch got started.

19Now let's take a step back at the history20of the program. Accessible Dispatch launched21citywide service in 2018, then expanding the22original Manhattan-only program. Using yellow23and green taxis, Accessible Dispatch enables24customers to request a wheelchair-accessible25taxi over the phone or via app to pick them up

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anywhere in the five boroughs.

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MTM was selected through an RFP process to operate and manage the program. At the time the program launched, there were 2,223 accessible vehicles affiliated with yellow taxi, and about 50 wheelchair-accessible vehicles available in the for-hire sector. At this time, Accessible Dispatch provided on-demand citywide service, finally making it easy and convenient to request a Waave when you needed one.

12 Over time, we have observed the decrease 13 in Accessible Dispatch trips requested and 14 completed. The decrease in trips is not due to 15 the lack of service, as there are more accessible taxis available and wait times are 16 17 shorter; rather customers have more ways to request a wheelchair-accessible vehicle across 18 19 all TLC sectors, depending on customer 20 preference as we saw on the previous slide. 21 We are also looking to redirect the 22 6 million in program operating costs that come 23 from the Taxi Improvement Fund to finance more 24 accessible taxis.

The next slide is about TLC licensed

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1	E-hail app rules. It lists the current E-hail
2	program rules and the proposed changes to the
3	E-hail program rules.
4	TLC licensed E-hail app providers have
5	been offering Waave service on their apps, this
6	is not new, it's already a requirement for
7	licensure. Some E-hail apps also contract with
8	the MTA to provide Access-A-Ride trips. Last
9	year E-hail providers completed 24,000 trips or
10	2,000 trips per month for when a customer
11	requested a Waave, and they provided almost
12	10,000 trips in a Waave regardless of the
13	customer's request.
14	The proposed changes to the E-hail rules
15	would make accessible service stronger and more
16	nimble in the taxi sector, similar to what
17	customers find in the FHV sector.
18	Specifically, the proposed changes to E-hail
19	rules would require E-hail app providers to
20	offer a call option for customers. We
21	understand this is a feature that is very
22	important to the community that uses Accessible
23	Dispatch, and we are keeping it under the new
24	model. The proposed rules require a call
25	center to operate 24 hours per day, seven days

PROCEEDINGS 1 per week, fully staffed by a trained human when 2 requested by the customer. 3 We are also cleaning trip data reporting and adding the time the driver arrives on scene 4 5 to monitor and evaluate wait time. No one wants to wait 15 to 20 minutes for a б 7 wheelchair-accessible vehicle, when you can get one in 10 to 12 minutes or less. 8 9 We're also considering adding 10 service-level standards in the future and will 11 use the improved data reporting to monitor 12 service. 13 Lastly, many of the driver rules related to assisting customers with disabilities were 14 15 in their own separate chapter; they will now be 16 moved to Chapter 80, Licensing Requirement for 17 All TLC Licensed Drivers. The next slide is the transition to 18 19 Accessible Dispatch E-Hail program, and it goes 20 over the various points that we are going to be 21 embarking on in the next few months. 22 We covered a lot of ground today, so where 23 do we go from here? MTM, the current operator, 24 will continue to operate the Accessible 25 Dispatch program through August to ensure there

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1	is overlap while we transition to the new
2	program model.
3	We are also setting up a phone service so
4	that all E-hail providers can be accessed from
5	a single number. Customers will just need to
6	call one number to be connected to the service
7	of their choice.
8	We have also met with disability
9	organizations prior to the hearing and will
10	continue to do so. Their feedback is paramount
11	to the success of the new program model, many
12	of which we will hear from today.
13	In the coming months, we will embark on
14	outreach initiatives to both current Accessible
15	Dispatch customers and drivers to make sure
16	they are aware of the changes that are coming
17	and how they can sign up for the new service.
18	Finally, feedback is extremely important
19	to us, and I know we have quite a few speakers
20	signed up today. If you are listening in and
21	did not sign up to speak, we invite you to
22	submit comment to tlcrules@TLC.nyc.gov so that
23	we can connect with you.
24	Thank you, Commissioners, and I am happy
25	to take any question you may have.

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1	CHAIR DO: Thank you, Cindi.
2	Commissioners, do you have any questions?
3	(No response.)
4	COMMISSIONER SORRENTINO: No, none. Thank
5	you.
6	CHAIR DO: Welcome Commissioner
7	Sorrentino.
8	COMMISSIONER SORRENTINO: Good morning,
9	everyone.
10	CHAIR DO: Okay. Hearing none, let's move
11	on to our public hearing. Sherryl, can you
12	lead us through that?
13	MS. ELUTO: Good morning. When I call
14	your name, you can unmute your microphone and
15	begin your testimony. Each speaker will be
16	allotted three minutes to speak. The time
17	limit will be strictly enforced. A thirty
18	second warning will be provided and then you
19	will need to conclude your testimony when your
20	time limit is up.
21	Today's rule proposal was published in the
22	City Record and posted on our website on
23	December 20, 2024. The public comment period
24	ends today. The video of this hearing and
25	copies of all written comments received through

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1	today will be provided to the commissioners
2	prior to the vote on these rules at the next
3	well, at a future commission meeting.
4	With that, we will begin our public
5	hearing, and I will call on our first speaker.
6	Our first speaker is Nicholas Astor, New
7	the York City Comptroller's Office. Mr. Astor,
8	you can unmute your mic and begin.
9	MR. ASTOR: Hello, everyone. Thank you
10	for letting me testify. I'm here on behalf of
11	New York Comptroller Brad Lander, and I'd like
12	to submit a statement here for comment.
13	Our office says that the TLC wants to
14	eliminate a program that connects New Yorkers
15	with an accessible taxis before it meets its
16	full legal mandate of fifty percent
17	wheelchair-accessible taxis in the system. The
18	dispatch program is a lifeline for disabled
19	taxi riders. It's the only way to call a cab
20	without a smartphone. We support the
21	disability commuity's advocacy to preserve it.
22	Thank you so much for your time today.
23	MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker up is Jean
24	Ryan from Disabled in Action. Ms. Ryan, you
25	unmute and begin.

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MS. RYAN: Good morning. I'm Jean Ryan, president of Disabled in Action, and I am a wheelchair user.

We represent people with all kinds of disabilities. We want to keep Accessible Dispatch service to people with disabilities with one phone number, which can also be accessed through 311, and which has trained people answering the phone, who understand the issues of people with disabilities and can be patient and helpful.

Being patient and helpful and easy to reach is not anything we have experienced from individual vendor phone lines, where we have been prevented from calling back, sent the wrong vehicle, and treated with impatience. We need a service which can be called back if the vehicle doesn't show up, or if we can't find it, or if they send the wrong kind of vehicle.

Lastly, we need a service who can understand people with speech differences and hearing loss who need transportation. With app vendors, we have been hung up on, listened to a recorded message, instead of a human when we had to call back, talk to clueless people, and

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1	encountered difficult phone trees. Who needs
2	that when you're just trying to get a cab.
3	I was able to reach a human with one
4	vendor, but then I could not understand the
5	vehicle license plate number when they sent the
6	information by an automated system with an
7	unconventional voice I could not understand,
8	because of hearing loss.
9	When my husband had a medical emergency
10	and was on the verge of dying in 2016, I could
11	not get to him in the hospital that night or
12	the next day because of the impossibility of
13	getting access rides spontaneously, and a
14	functional accessible dispatch service did not
15	exist.
16	We need to get places on this spur of the
17	moment without having to book a trip the day
18	before. Not everyone can use an app or deal
19	with the phone tree because of age or
20	disability.
21	Thank you.
22	MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker is Eman
23	Rimawi-Doster from the Disability Justice Firm.
24	Please unmute your microphone and begin.
25	MS. RIMAWI-DOSTER: Sorry, can you hear

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PROCEEDINGS 1 me? 2 MS. ELUTO: Yes. 3 MS. RIMAWI-DOSTER: Sorry about the 4 background noise. 5 Thank you so much and good morning. My name is Eman Rimawi-Doster, and I'm senior б 7 community organizer for New York Lawyers for the Public Interest and the Disability Justice 8 9 Program. 10 The TLC in the City should find money to 11 pay for accessible cars and vehicles elsewhere, 12 aside from shutting off Accessible Dispatch. 13 I'm worried about the people who have jobs 14 there who will no longer have jobs after 15 February 28th. I don't want them punished simply because some -- the TLC doesn't find the 16 17 use and the worth of this program. Please 18 don't kill Accessible Dispatch. 19 There are over a million people with disabilities in our city, and that's a lot of 20 21 potential customers. The City constantly talks 22 about the importance of getting disabled New 23 Yorkers to work, but this would ultimately cut 24 disabled people off from getting to work and 25 cut people off from their current jobs at

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### PROCEEDINGS 1 Accessible Dispatch. That is not equity. 2 Why don't you guys get these people with 3 disabilities who are gonna lose their job February 28th, a job with this new approach 4 5 that you're talking about. I've heard nothing б but awes from you all, with no clear action 7 steps and I'm worried about them, as much as I'm worried about the people who won't get the 8 9 vehicles that they need. 10 Thank you so much. 11 MS. ELUTO: Thank you. Our next speaker is Joseph Rappaport from 12 13 the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled. 14 15 MR. RAPPAPORT: Good morning. I'm Joe 16 Rappaport, Executive Director of the Brooklyn 17 Center for Independence of the Disabled. 18 We hope that all the commissioners here 19 have had a chance to read the sign-on letter 20 fourteen disability groups sent to Mayor Adams 21 last week and to the TLC yesterday and before. 22 The groups represent a wide range of the 23 disability community, including independent 24 living centers like mine, groups that represent 25 blind New Yorkers, and several other

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organizations.

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We're united with this -- with these simple messages, as we wrote in the letter to Mayor Adams. First, don't fix what isn't broken, Accessible Dispatch, as it's designed now, works. It takes just one simple call to reach a New York City based dispatchers who can understand you, and get you a taxi right away. I've used it for colleagues. It's rare that government funded programs works as well as Accessible Dispatch has for me and for others. No one from our community asked for the program to change, and it makes no sense to abandon it.

14 Second, disabled New Yorkers depend on 15 Accessible Dispatch. As we quote Bernard Carabello in our letter, "If Accessible 16 17 Dispatch is stopped, I have no way to get 18 places. It's locking me out in my apartment. 19 I won't be able to go out anywhere. Someone 20 with my type of disability can't use apps and 21 needs to be able to make phone calls with people I know will understand me." 22

Third, making it harder to get an accessible taxi with the explanation that you must kill the program to get more accessible

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taxis on the road is bazaar. It should not
this should not be a zero sum game, you can and
should do both. We're happy to work with you
to find the funding otherwise.

5 Fourth, this is a job killer, as Eman б mentioned. Accessible Dispatch employs several 7 disabled New Yorkers who will lose their jobs 8 if you eliminate the program. This clashes with the City's own commitment to employment 9 10 for people with disabilities. The staff argues 11 that it will replace Accessible Dispatch with 12 something better, if only given the chance. 13 I'm not sure why you would want to, since it is likely that your savings will be slight and the 14 15 program already works as is, and you would be 16 fobbing off your program to companies that 17 historically have been hostile to accessibility and to disabled people, but if you do make the 18 19 change, you must make sure the program meets if 20 very minimal requirements that the --21 Thirty seconds remaining. TIMEKEEPER: 22 MR. RAPPAPORT: Sure. 23 -- that the Mayor's office for people with 24 disabilities has set out to do that, you should 25 delay, as you appear to be starting to think

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1	about, any plan to shelf Accessible Dispatch
2	and work with our community to design a
3	comparable or better program, or maybe, to
4	paraphrase the George Gershwin song, you should
5	just call the whole thing off.
6	Thank you.
7	MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker is John
8	CHAIR DO: Sherryl.
9	MS. ELUTO: Yes.
10	CHAIR DO: I have a question for Joe.
11	We have talked extensively on this, Joe,
12	and, you know, something that I've asked you
13	and the other advocates is, what else can we do
14	within the rules to put more teeth to this,
15	right? We have evolved on this very issue to
16	go from automated call center to a 24/7 call
17	center with a live person with training
18	involved, both disability etiquette for all
19	people. What else can we do to make this
20	program even better as we transition
21	potentially, I'll use the word "potentially,"
22	to assist them that is rules based that forces,
23	right, some of these providers who provide
24	services already to Access-A-Ride, to other
25	cities, like Chicago, even better in New York

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PROCEEDINGS City? 1 2 MR. RAPPAPORT: Yeah, that's -- thanks for 3 asking. You know, I think that, you know, we would 4 5 like to know the details of whatever training б you come up with and the procedures. You know, 7 in the current proposal, it just says, you 8 know, you will have the ability to call in. When Cynthia was making her presentation, it 9 10 sound -- unless I misheard, it sounded like she 11 was suggesting that there would be the option 12 to talk to a human being. When you call the 13 current program that's not -- you know, you're 14 not said, hey, do you want to talk to a machine 15 or go through a series of prompts, somebody 16 picks up and takes your request and dispatches the taxi. 17 18 So, you know, I think another concern is 19 making sure that, you know, the person or 20 people who are, you know, equipped to answer from, you know, the various companies are 21 22 talking to people with disabilities all day and 23 are in New York because it doesn't make sense 24 to have, like, a clearinghouse in another part 25 of the country because it really does make a

PROCEEDINGS 1 difference to have New Yorkers fielding the 2 calls. 3 So, you know, is there a way of making it Maybe. You know, obviously our argument 4 work? 5 is that this is not worth your time. The б amount the of money that you're gonna spend 7 making this change, sitting with us, you know, 8 is worth -- better spent in other ways, but, you know, look, we're happy to talk some more, 9 10 but, you know, you got a program that works, 11 what's the -- and, as I testified, you know, no 12 one from our community asked for the program to 13 change. 14 I don't know if that answers your 15 question. 16 CHAIR DO: Thank you. Like, I think, 17 Cindi said in her presentation that we're going 18 to work with MTM to extend this program, at 19 least for six more months, if not longer, to 20 make sure that the transition is smooth, and, 21 you know, we'll obviously talk about what else 22 you would like to see as we transition, 23 potentially, underlined, this program. 24 MR. RAPPAPORT: Appreciate that. 25 CHAIR DO: But thank you, Joe, for your

PROCEEDINGS 1 testimony and for answering my questions. 2 Are there any other questions for Joe 3 here? Thank you. Joe, thanks for 4 MS. KAUFMAN: 5 testifying and for reaching out. б I guess, I'm wondering if there is a way, 7 Commissioner Do, if we can all collaborate on 8 the list of requirements from the new call centers and what -- you know, so we can build a 9 10 list of requirements together to make it 11 accommodated for all the needs that have been 12 outlined today. 13 CHAIR DO: Yeah, I'm committed to that. 14 MOPD, the Mayor's Office for People with 15 Disabilities, has sent over a list; I plan to 16 incorporate that list into the rules. MS. KAUFMAN: Great. 17 18 CHAIR DO: Joe, do you have a comment on 19 that? 20 MR. RAPPAPORT: Well, you know, obviously, 21 whatever requirements are put in place should 22 be in the rule, and so, you know, I think in 23 our letter, or maybe in my testimony, everything is blending in, you know, I 24 25 suggested that this be, obviously, you not move

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	TROCHEDINGD
1	forward, but whatever happens should be
2	delayed, any transition should be delayed until
3	we figure out what those are, as Sarah has
4	suggested, you know, currently they're not in
5	the rules.
б	One thing I just really want to say is,
7	you know, I'm concerned about the idea of
8	working with several companies to try to get
9	them to set up, you know, an office that or,
10	you know, a team of people who handle requests
11	because, you know, there are some advantages to
12	that that that I understand, but having people
13	available all the time and, as Jean Ryan
14	suggested, able to take calls, that's something
15	that I really can't imagine these companies are
16	gonna do well because of their, you know,
17	really, you know, more than a decade and a half
18	of hostility toward people with disabilities,
19	but we're happy to come up you know, look at
20	what MOPD has suggested and come up with a list
21	that would have to be integrated into any
22	program that moves forward.
23	CHAIR DO: And certainly I think, to be
24	completely transparent, February 28th is not
25	going to be the transition for Accessible

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Dispatch to Accessible Dispatch 2.0. It's gonna take a little bit longer than that, and we're working with MOCS, the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, to extend that MTM contract for at least a little while, while we make that transition.

Secondly, I think, you know, some of these providers have provided services and in other cities, like I mentioned earlier, and we will continue to work with you, Joe, and the other stakeholders to put more teeth within the rules, not just on a piece of paper outside the rules, but within the rules with teeth to make sure that they are accountable to people with disabilities.

Paul.

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17 COMMISSIONER BADER: Joe, I just think 18 also, there is somehow a communications issue 19 here relative to this issue. Speaking for myself, and I think for some of the other 20 21 commissioners, the intent here is not to 22 provide lesser service at all; the intent here 23 is to -- is just to change, we understand -- we 24 want to make sure that the new system that's 25 being -- that any new system that goes into

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existence is an enhanced system.

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Change is not always bad, sometimes change is good, and the world does change and we all have to go along with it. We want to ensure that anybody -- any disability -- anybody with disabilities has the ability to speak to somebody 24/7 so they can get a taxi in the shortest amount possible.

9 We are aware that in both the for-hire 10 vehicle and the taxi industry, that more and 11 more of it is moving to an app-based, and we 12 understand that that doesn't always work, 13 needless to say, but these companies provide 14 that, and we want to ensure that they are the 15 ones also that are providing the service that 16 will have the live person in the dispatch 17 system so that anybody can get -- work with 18 whatever system they want to get the fastest 19 taxi that they need.

So, yes, as Commissioner Kaufman said, we want to work with you and all the other advocates to ensure that the new system that goes into existence is even an enhanced system from what we currently have. It is not, in any way, our intent to provide -- to provide a

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1	diminished service for what at the moment
2	what currently, you must that is what the
3	intent is here, and that's what a lot of us are
4	committed to do.
5	MR. RAPPAPORT: I appreciate that, and,
6	you know, you know, we're committed as well to
7	making sure whatever system moves forward is
8	one that works for everyone.
9	You know there are a lot of safeguards
10	that could be put in place to make sure that a
11	dispatch system, an accessible dispatch system
12	works with other vendors, other companies and,
13	you know, we are prepared to try to make sure
14	that happens, if that's how the direction
15	the TLC goes.
16	Not to repeat myself, you know, in 2019,
17	the MTA killed a system called Advanced
18	Reservation for Access-A-Ride, and they called
19	it Enhanced Broker Service, and it turned out
20	that it was much, much worse then the service.
21	So, I appreciate your, you know, your stated
22	commitment from you and the other commissions
23	to make something that is better. I do have to
24	say that, you know, my you know, we worry
25	when someone says this not to pick on you or

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1	anything, but we worry when somebody says,
2	we're gonna have an enhanced service because in
3	our experience, at least recently with the MTA,
4	it turned out to be a much worse service.
5	So, you know, that's why I understand
б	the need to diversify and so on, but, you know,
7	the reason why, I think people have really
8	objected to this plan is, as I said earlier, no
9	one asked for it, the current system does work
10	and, you know, I guess show me would be what we
11	would say in response.
12	CHAIR DO: I'll leave the final comment
13	here, but, like I said, you know, I'm willing
14	to work with you, Joe, our other advocates to
15	make sure that the transition is smooth, that
16	we have multiple options, including MTM in the
17	foreseeable future as we do the transition.
18	So while customers will still have one
19	phone number, they will have different options,
20	including MTM, and so that we can have that
21	transition over time and look at the data.
22	This is something that, I think, Commissioner
23	Valazquez would like to see, and something that
24	I will work with my team to see make happen.
25	So, it might be MTM, Curb, Arrow, or another

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PROCEEDINGS 1 provider, and the customer can have that option 2 for, at least, some period of time, as we do 3 that transition. Okay. We have a lot more speakers, so 4 5 I'll leave it there, and put it pack to б Sherryl. 7 MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker is John 8 Mascialino, speaking on behalf of Curb 9 Mobility. 10 MR. MASCIALINO: Good morning, 11 Commissioners. My name is John Mascialino from 12 the law firm Greenberg Traurig LLP, and we 13 represent Curb Mobility, a licensed technology service provider and an E-hail app provider. 14 15 This morning, I will limit my comments to 16 one specific issue with the rules. 17 The proposed rules switching from having a 18 dispatch vendor under contract with the TLC to 19 a rule making seems to switch the technology 20 and cost to the technology service providers. 21 Under the existing rules and the existing 22 program, Chapter 6622 C, which is being 23 repealed today, it allows the TSPs to negotiate 24 a fee arrangement for the proper integration 25 and success of the program. This has been in

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place between Curb and MTM for the past several years. However, that ability to charge does have the limitations in the rule, as you can see.

Under the proposed rules, there seems to have been no replacements of that kind of business interaction between the TSPs and the unspecified, unknown list of future vendors, as some of the language is being changed to reflect that there would be any future licensed TLC vendor, as well as any potential future TSPs that enter the marketplace.

13 The payment for the cost of integration 14 for the TSP was a critical piece of the 15 accessible program, it allows for the proper 16 integration and support from the TSPs and to 17 the dispatch vendor, and also provided a 18 reasonable fee for the Ties to protect themselves from risk and cost. This has been 19 working well again over the past several years. 20

We ask that that -- that some kind of implementation of a cost ability and a reimbursable ability be put back into the rules. We have submitted a letter where we have indicated the section of the rules that we

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1	believe this can apply to in 6624 and, again it
2	would be replacing the current section, which
3	has a \$1 for each trip and replace that with
4	similar language that exists now, which
5	expressly says that the TSP may charge an
6	entity licensed by Commission to route
7	accessible E-hail requests, including other
8	TSPs, for the cost of labor, equipment, data,
9	data connections, or any other expenses
10	resulting from the data connection to the TSP.
11	We believe that this is an important
12	change that would need to be made, as the TSPs
13	have been a critical component of the program
14	and its success over the past few years.
15	Thank you very much for your time, and I
16	know that you will hear some other issues from
17	Curb directly as well, from an operational
18	point of view.
19	And before I break, I do want to thank
20	Commissioner Davidson and her team for the
21	willingness to speak over the past couple weeks
22	and have discussions about some of these issues
23	that are being addressed today and for her
24	presentation earlier. Thank you again to the
25	TLC for your cooperation. Thank you.

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PROCEEDINGS 1 MS. ELUTO: Thank you. Our next speaker Elizabeth Valdez from 2 3 Brooklyn Center for Independence of the 4 Disabled. Please unmute your microphone. 5 MS. VALDEZ: Hi, yes, my name is Elizabeth б Valdez. 7 First and foremost, you know, I worry 8 about the people who are going to lose, of 9 course, their jobs. 10 Second of all, I just enjoy the fact that 11 I wouldn't have to deal with an app, I can just 12 call, speak to people, and also apps, they tend 13 to want to force you to have a credit card on 14 I don't always have a credit card. file. Т 15 prefer to just pay cash. That's why I like it. 16 Also I have people that come -- that come 17 here to New York and they visit, and they 18 wouldn't always want to have an app, and they 19 would prefer to just call, and not all 20 disabilities are going to be -- how can I say? 21 I mean, they're not going -- so, you may say 22 you're going to change and evolve, but 23 disabilities don't change, and they are not 24 going to be able to always use the app, and 25 they would prefer to just call in, because I

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1	have had a few of them tell me that they are
2	not too crazy about the changes that are
3	coming.
4	That's my view on this matter.
5	CHAIR DO: Thank you.
6	MS. ELUTO: Thank you.
7	Our next speaker is Kathleen Collins.
8	MS. COLLINS: Sorry to keep you waiting.
9	My name is Kathleen Collins. I'm a congenital
10	quadruple amputee, who uses a wheelchair, and
11	I've lived my entire life in New York City.
12	I'm on the board of Disabled in Action, and
13	actively participate in several other
14	disability organizations.
15	We totally oppose the part of the proposed
16	amendment that would eliminate the Accessible
17	Dispatch program. The Accessible Dispatch
18	program has a dedicated provider that any
19	person can contact to get a taxicab to come to
20	them. You do not even have to remember the
21	number for Accessible Dispatch since you can
22	call 331 and they can connect you to Accessible
23	Dispatch.
24	We are glad to see that the decision to
25	replace the Accessible Dispatch program has

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1	been placed on hold. We just heard about this
2	today, so I'm going to have to, now, rearrange
3	my testimony here a little bit.
4	We want any proposed rule to require that
5	you have no tree that you have to follow, that
б	you get a person immediately, that this person
7	is trained to talk to you.
8	I don't understand why you're going to
9	have it that we have to choose who to go to
10	make a phone call to, but we have enough
11	decisions and things to worry about in our
12	lives, I don't want to have to call somebody
13	and then find out that they're horrible at
14	providing me with services.
15	Already, we have heard from one person
16	today, talking from Curb, about cost and that
17	there is going to be something talked about
18	operational point of view, so I'm just
19	wondering what are they worried about, and if
20	they are already worried about what they're
21	gonna be doing, how they're gonna be providing
22	services to us, it sounds to me.
23	I don't understand why we are trying to
24	change something that isn't broken, that works
25	for people. I know that the understanding here

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1	is that first of all, let me say, any
2	proposed rule should require the same that we
3	have now, and I don't understand why we're
4	trying to replace something that is broken
5	(sic) merely to purportedly save a few dollars,
6	which in the end, probably will cost more to
7	get a system as good as we already have. This
8	does not make sense.
9	If the Taxi & Limousine Commission needs
10	more money to fund the conversion of taxis into
11	wheelchair-accessible vehicles, I respectfully
12	submit that the TLC need such needs to seek
13	such funding from the City, and not from us.
14	This is absurd. Something works, we have
15	one number to call, and it works. I know
16	TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.
17	MS. COLLINS: people, many times, have
18	to call this number when they're under stress,
19	they're out there, you're freezing, or you're
20	super hot, and you don't know how to get home
21	or how to get to an important appointment.
22	We need this. I know it saved a friend of
23	mine when we went out to lunch and her
24	Access-A-Ride didn't show up, even though they
25	said they were gonna be there.

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PROCEEDINGS 1 Please, please work with us and keep this 2 program. Thank you. 3 MS. ELUTO: Thank you. Our next speaker is Aleksey Medvedovskiy 4 5 of Myle. б MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: Good morning, 7 everybody. Good morning, Commissioners. Thank 8 you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of 9 critical work. 10 I totally understand that whatever works 11 should not be broken; however, and this is 12 strictly how Myle operates, this is strictly 13 how we operate at Myle, we treat every 14 accessible trip, not as a trip, it's a service 15 that we have to provide. It's more than just 16 taking a person from point A to point B, it's 17 an actual service where the driver should know 18 what he's doing, where dispatch, and I'm 19 talking about professional dispatch that 20 understands what it takes to transport a person 21 with disabilities, not just a regular car shows 22 up and tries to do curb-to-curb pick up. 23 Therefore, every trip is, in our mind, and 24 we notice this and we're doing this, we do have 25 a call center, we have been working through the

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phone numbers for since 2018 and it's proven
to work that apps cannot provide a level of
service that people with special needs, people
with disabilities need.

5 Like I stated before, every single trip is б not a trip, it's a service that requires some 7 kind of special attention, some kind of special 8 treatment. In other words, you always have to go an extra mile when you're transporting or 9 10 providing service for people with disabilities. 11 Therefore, just having a generic phone number 12 or people answering and sending a cab, in our 13 mind, is not enough. We have to be -- at 14 least, what we have and I think what a call 15 center should have is a staff of professional 16 dispatchers that understand the times, that 17 understand the zones, that understand the areas 18 of pickups and drop offs, either it's the City, 19 or it's Queens, or it's Staten Island, and 20 that's what has to take place and that's what 21 needed, more of a ATC, air traffic control type 22 of dispatch, where sometimes people need an 23 extra ten minutes to get out of the house. 24 Regular app drivers just wait five minutes, 25 press no show and leave, while the passenger or

PROCEEDINGS 1 client is struggling to get out of the building 2 or get out of the house, depending on the 3 zones. Therefore, that's what we do here, that's 4 the service that we provide, and I think it's 5 б crucially important to understand that this is 7 not a transportation segment, it's a service 8 that we provide, along with transportation. 9 I totally support the changes and ideas 10 implementing these rules for E-hail providers. 11 CHAIR DO: Aleksey, this is David Do, commissioner of the TLC. 12 13 So, if these rules were implemented, would 14 you be prepared to service people with 15 disabilities through a phone number. And how would you -- you know, you say you provide a 16 17 service, not just a trip, right, how would that 18 look for people with disabilities from Myle's 19 perspective. 20 MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: Absolutely, 21 Commissioner. Not only would we be ready, we 22 actually do it right now with a subcontract for 23 MTA and private rides. 24 Every single dispatcher is properly 25 trained, understands the severity of the trip.

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	TROCHDINGD
1	For example, we had bad weather on Monday, it
2	was snowy, it was bad outside, we had to call
3	every single driver that was an accessible trip
4	and explain to him that he can't just wait for
5	ten minutes, you got to provide additional
6	time, you got to make sure that you have the
7	passenger, you got to make sure that it
8	takes the car is clean, you got to make sure
9	there's no snow, no ice and whatnot. So we
10	take precaution steps to understand and
11	understand how not easy it is and should not be
12	treated as a regular trip. Again, we don't
13	provide trips, we provide service. There's
14	service trips, along with providing service.
15	So, to answer your question, yes, we are
16	ready. Yes, we're absolutely ready, and we
17	have been doing this, it seems to work, and it
18	works, and we'll continue doing the same thing.
19	CHAIR DO: Thank you so much.
20	Commissioner Bader.
21	COMMISSIONER BADER: I just forgot I had
22	muted.
23	How many calls, how many trips, how
24	many do you provide monthly now to people
25	with disabilities for Waave vehicles.

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1	MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: I would say under a
2	thousand at the moment.
3	COMMISSIONER BADER: And is all of the
4	trips that you provide for yellow cab or you
5	also provide for for-hire vehicle?
б	MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: For for-hire vehicles
7	as well, but it's the same call center.
8	COMMISSIONER BADER: It's the same call
9	center for both, right.
10	MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: Correct.
11	COMMISSIONER BADER: And so you provide
12	about a thousand trips a month.
13	MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: Well, it's more than a
14	thousand, under E-hail, it's about a thousand
15	trips a month.
16	COMMISSIONER BADER: Under E-hail, it's
17	about a thousand trips a month.
18	So you get more for E-hails than phones?
19	MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: Well, we treat them all
20	as E-hails because the trip is being dispatched
21	to the driver through an app, but then we
22	follow, through phone calls, making sure the
23	driver understands the requirements and
24	procedures that have to take place, in order
25	for the trip to be serviced.

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1	One of the examples, door-to-door, like I
2	said, Monday was bad weather, we haven't
3	dropped anybody off curb-to-curb. We always
4	made sure that the passenger with disability
5	getting in to the building, or the lobby of the
6	building and whatnot, depending on where they
7	are, or at least to get through the sidewalk.
8	Like I said, it's a service-based type of
9	trip, rather than just a trip?
10	COMMISSIONER BADER: Thank you.
11	CHAIR DO: What training do you provide
12	your call center dispatchers? You know, I
13	guess this question is more for me to learn
14	about what I need to put in the rules to make a
15	better call center for all the people who want
16	to use the call center.
17	MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: Absolutely. Again I'm
18	gonna kind of stick to the same thing. What I
19	teach, and I'm the one who is teaching my call
20	center, first thing that we train them is that
21	this is not a trip, it's the service. Find out
22	what needs a person with disabilities has, what
23	are the special needs, what are they struggling
24	with, do they there is a lot of different
25	ways, is the person visually impaired, or is

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1	the person in a wheelchair, is it an electrical
2	wheelchair, is it bariatric wheelchair, is it
3	regular wheelchair. This way we'll know what
4	vehicle to send because, as we all know, not
5	every vehicle is a wheelchair-accessible
6	vehicle can take all the wheelchair types. For
7	example, for a fact, a lot of vehicles cannot
8	take bariatric wheelchair, which is oversized,
9	we know that. So we know, for example,
10	Chrysler Pacifica can and Siennas cannot, as an
11	example, I'm using this as an example right
12	now, or Transit Connect cannot take bariatric,
13	or (unintelligible) hardly takes any kind of
14	wheelchairs because the back seat has to flip
15	up.
16	So that's what we train, we find out what
17	kind of wheelchair the person is using. Again,
18	it's not just people on wheelchairs. We talk
19	about visually impaired, the driver has to help
20	the person get into the car and out of the car.
21	Does the passenger have bags with him, maybe he
22	needs help with bags.
23	So much goes into the training, it's kind
24	of hard to explain in a couple of minutes, but
25	I'll gladly show what we do and how we do it.

PROCEEDINGS 1 On average, it takes us good five to seven days 2 to train a group of dispatchers, a group of 3 five, we don't do more than five at a time. And then they sit next to professional 4 5 dispatchers. And I've been dispatching since I'm 14 б 7 myself, so I kind of caught the best of both worlds, the old-school dispatcher, the car 8 9 services, and the old-school limo companies and 10 switch toward app provider, so we kind of 11 combined both and created this hybrid model 12 from day 1. 13 CHAIR DO: That was very helpful. Thank 14 you so much, Aleksey, I appreciate your time. 15 MR. MEDVEDOVSKIY: Thank you. 16 CHAIR DO: Any other questions? 17 (No response.) Thank you so much. 18 19 Sherryl. 20 MS. ELUTO: Sure. Next speak, Monica 21 Bartley from Disabled in Action. 22 MS. BARTLEY: Good morning. My name is 23 Monica Bartley, a board member of Disabled in 24 Action, and I'm a wheelchair user. 25 I strongly oppose the New York City Taxi

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1	Limousine Commission's proposal to replace the
2	Accessible Dispatch program with individual
3	apps for Waave dispatchers.
4	I rely on Accessible Dispatch regularly
5	because, in my neighborhood, yellow taxis are
6	rarely available. Additionally, I face
7	significant challenges hailing a taxi from
8	stands, at the airport or train stations, as
9	many drivers claim their ramps are broken.
10	Accessible Dispatch is a vital service that
11	ensures I can access an accessible taxi when I
12	need one.
13	For many New Yorkers, Accessible Dispatch
14	is a lifeline, especially in
15	critical situations. People use the service
16	when they're under considerable stress, such as
17	when they're trying to make an appointment or
18	return home. The customer service
19	representatives who assist them must the well
20	trained to handle these high-stress
21	interactions and understand the diverse needs
22	of people with various disabilities, whether
23	verbal, auditory, manual, dexterity, or
24	cognitive.
25	We know that Accessible Dispatch has

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served a vital role for countless New Yorkers
and visitors who cannot use app-based
transportation services. The current proposal,
as written, lacks a clear customer service
system and does not guarantee that the new
dispatch system would offer trained staff,
capable of meeting the needs of people with
disabilities.
Furthermore, replacing Accessible
Dispatch, a cost effective and reliable system
with an untested alternative could be
ineffective and far more expensive. This is a
risk that does not seem justified. I urge the
Commission to reject this proposal to phase out
the Accessible Dispatch program. It is a
service that works well and should be
preserved.
Thank you for allowing me the opportunity
to testify.
MS. ELUTO: Thank you.
Our next speaker is Sharon Shapiro.
MS. SHAPIRO: Hi. I'd like to thank the
Commission for having us testify.
I would like to state that I want to make
you aware of who is using the system, people

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1	who cannot use their hands well like me, people
2	who do not have smartphones or cannot use apps,
3	people who have vision loss, people with speech
4	disabilities like me, people who cannot follow
5	multi-step instructions, wheelchair user who
б	get bypassed by empty taxis, people who are
7	outside Manhattan out-of-towners, seniors,
8	Access-A-Ride users who cannot get a ride, or
9	have been stranded in another borough or far
10	away, people with spontaneous needs who need to
11	get to the hospital or to speak at a meeting
12	that they're due to speak at.
13	And we need diverse trainers. We need
14	trainers, not only to talk about how you embark
15	and disembark people in wheelchairs but people
16	who like me who have speech disabilities, who
17	often get hung up upon by people on the other
18	end of the phone thinking that I'm kidding
19	around or that I
20	TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.
21	MS. SHAPIRO: or inebriated.
22	So at the end, I ask you to keep what is
23	working if you need to transition to using
24	independent living centers and advocates with
25	disabilities to demonstrate and keep as many

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PROCEEDINGS 1 employees from the existing system in the 2 system. 3 Thank you. Thank you. 4 MS. ELUTO: 5 Our next speaker is Dorel Tamam, Curb. MR. TAMAM: Good morning, Chairman Do and б 7 members of the Commission. My name is Dorel Tamam and I'm the head of Curb's mobile 8 9 business unit, where I oversee our mobile 10 products and services across the country. 11 First let me express our support for the 12 proposed rule aimed at streamlining the 13 regulatory approach to the Waave dispatch 14 program. We believe this change has the 15 potential to significantly improve efficiency 16 and reduce cost, which would benefit all 17 stakeholders involved. However, we have several concerns that we would like to address. 18 19 The first is masking a vehicle type for 20 Waave trips. One of our primary concerns is 21 the masking of vehicle type for Waave trips within the offer. This change would prevent 22 23 drivers from knowing the type of trips they are 24 This change would deviate from the accepting. 25 full transparency model and trust we have

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1	established within the industry, and the lack
2	of clarity could lead to confusion and may
3	impact drivers' willingness to accept these
4	trips, in addition to the best practices we
5	have helped develop within the industry.
б	If the concern is increasing the
7	probability of a driver to accept the ride, we
8	believe there are other analytical and
9	management practices within our platform that
10	we could better help this concern, based on our
11	trailing experience and success.
12	The second is the elimination of the
13	deadhead fee. We believe the proposed
14	elimination of the deadhead fee could
15	discourage drivers from accepting
16	longer-distance pick up jobs. Without
17	compensation for the time and distance traveled
18	without a passenger, drivers are less likely to
19	take jobs that involve longer pickup distances
20	and interborough trips.
21	Third and last is the shift of financial
22	responsibility. We are concerned about the
23	shift of financial responsibility to E-hail and
24	TSP providers. Operating efficient Waave
25	programs require significant operational and

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technological resources; however, the proposed program does not include provision for financial aid or support to establish and maintain the necessary infrastructure and management.

Thank you. These are our comments, and I would like to say last, at Curb we remain committed to improving the service and cost efficiency of the Waave program and will continue to offer assistance and expertise to address any challenges or concerns related to the program. Pleasure, and thank you.

13 CHAIR DO: Dorel, on the masking issue, 14 what other technique should we use to increase 15 those who use wheelchairs or those who have 16 disabilities to get a trip within a Waave? You 17 said other analytical tools that are available, 18 so obviously, with the -- with masking, the 19 ability for a driver to see who is being picked 20 up in a wheelchair or otherwise should, in 21 probability, increase the percentage that 22 people with disabilities and people who use 23 wheelchairs can get a trip, so, you know, if 24 you're saying, you know, there are unintended 25 consequences to that, what other things should

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we consider?

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MR. TAMAM: Some things to consider that we do because -- one program I would like to reference is a program that we're dedicated in servicing within the city of Chicago, where we're currently serving tens of thousands of Waave trips a month with our call center, so a lot of the techniques that we use are embedded within our platform, within our dispatch algorithm, really looking at driver behaviors, you know, times of days, how to really optimize the acceptance of service. So a lot of what we do is, kind of, proprietary and within the back end.

15 The main concern about talking about 16 masking of the Waave and within the offer, within the interface our drivers are used to, 17 18 we usually find that transparency is very 19 important with providing best services. So, 20 you know, we talked about, and it was referenced earlier here on the call, that it's 21 22 not just about providing transportation A to B, 23 but it's also about providing service. And 24 drivers being cognizant that they're going into 25 a Waave ride also puts them within the right

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1	state of mind on, as soon as they get onsite,
2	they are able to, from the getgo, provide the
3	best services that they have been trained for.
4	But really directly, Commissioner Do, to
5	your statement, a lot of it is really within
б	the back end and how we use to optimize service
7	because, in Chicago for instance, we're doing a
8	lot more Waave rides with less Waaves then we
9	do have accessible here in New York, and we're
10	able to really meet very crucial SLAs to
11	satisfactory operational performance, but that
12	also comes with the needed infrastructure to
13	run such a program.
14	CHAIR DO: So you run, I guess, a similar
15	program in Chicago and you won, I think, from
16	me talking to my Chicago partners, the RFP in
17	Chicago to provide a similar service to
18	Accessible Dispatch with, obviously, financial
19	benefits to that, whereas here, like you said,
20	we're shifting the financial responsibility.
21	But I guess specifically I want you to talk
22	about the Chicago program, what you do there,
23	what training do you implement, and how
24	successful that program is in the other city.
25	MR. TAMAM: So the type of the

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1	operation within Chicago, the service is really
2	split between app-based and within the call
3	center. One unique thing we have implemented
4	within our call center is IVR. You know, not
5	everyone likes to deal with the IVR, but it is
6	very efficient, and it's easy for a passenger
7	calling in to get rerouted to an agent, so
8	there is a very large human touch there.
9	Now, the way we were able to become
10	successful within the program, we're currently
11	operating on about a 95 percent success rate,
12	is, you know, we do monthly trainings with all
13	drivers, which is best practices, just, kind
14	of, going back to what we were speaking on
15	about not masking the Waave because people
16	enjoy the type of service and the catering and
17	the way drivers communicate to them, which is
18	very important when you're offering such
19	service.
20	When it comes to performance, going back
21	to the deadhead fees and other financial
22	incentives, within Chicago, there's two types
23	of incentives that drivers are getting. The
24	first one is, kind of, let's call it, if a
25	driver hits a specific quota, they're able to

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1	get financial benefits and also they get
2	something that's called an airport voucher,
3	where they're able to receive this voucher, go
4	to the airports, which is also a big hub that,
5	we're familiar, taxi drivers like and use the
б	voucher to go to the front of the line. So
7	it's incentives on the monetary side and also
8	accessibility to get a ride that drivers do
9	seem as beneficial to them.
10	CHAIR DO: Do you print out that front of
11	the line pass, or quickly pass from the meter.
12	MR. TAMAM: Yeah.
13	CHAIR DO: Okay, maybe that's something we
14	can consider and work on.
15	If this rules based approach were to pass,
16	would you be prepared to take on the Accessible
17	Dispatch program, including the call center.
18	MR. TAMAM: Yes, I do believe so. We have
19	the practices and experience to do so.
20	CHAIR DO: And you would think that there
21	needs to be incentives, though?
22	MR. TAMAM: We do feel that the incentives
23	are very big. Going back to, you know, the
24	part that, a very big thing is, we see that
25	when drivers see that pickups are very far away

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PROCEEDINGS from them because within our offers, we're very 1 2 transparent, we see a derogating probability of 3 them accepting, so being able to support and compensate them as is already implemented in 4 5 the existing program is a very important б aspect. 7 CHAIR DO: If they got an airport pass to be the front of the line, let's say at JFK, is 8 9 that enough of an incentive? 10 MR. TAMAM: I feel like it could help, but 11 the incentive definitely has more of a 12 magnitude of influence. 13 CHAIR DO: That was very helpful. 14 Are there any other questions from the 15 commissioners? 16 (No response.) 17 Thank you so much, Dorel, I appreciate 18 your time. MS. ELUTO: 19 Thank you. 20 Next speaker Evan Yankey from the Brooklyn 21 Center for Independence of the Disabled. 22 MR. YANKEY: Hello, everybody. Can you 23 hear me? 24 MS. ELUTO: Yes. 25 Thanks for having us. MR. YANKEY:

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PROCEEDINGS 1 Instead of saying my testimony, because we have 2 learned a lot of new information, I'm just 3 gonna try to address some of what's been said 4 today. 5 I'm advocacy director for BCID. We have б been asking for you to not eliminate Accessible 7 Dispatch and we continue to ask for that. 8 You know, we appreciate sharing the 9 numbers about the usage of Accessible Dispatch. 10 Every time that we see you present the 11 comparison between usage of Accessible Dispatch 12 being lower than E-hail providers, I worry that 13 you think that Accessible Dispatch is an unpopular service, which it's not. 14 Our 15 perspective is that the lower numbers of usage 16 for Accessible Dispatch than other services is 17 because there are certain types of people with 18 disabilities and others who only can use that 19 service. So our perspective is, eliminating 20 this service is discriminating against people 21 with specific types of disabilities. To us, 22 like, presenting that there's lower numbers who 23 use the service, it's -- it doesn't prevent 24 that discrimination. 25 You know, in light of the information we

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1	have received today, we approach people being
2	able to work with us on these issues. Joe
3	mentioned that we would want the requirements
4	that we talk about and that it looks we're
5	going to have to talk about it in the future to
6	be written in to the rules. But beyond that,
7	we also want enforcement mechanisms.
8	So, in rule as it currently is, there are
9	enforcement mechanisms for some aspects of
10	driver behavior, provider behavior,
11	installation of technology, where there's fines
12	if people don't meet these goals. We would
13	want something similar to the customer service
14	portion of this to make sure people are meeting
15	their goals.
16	I'm going to try to get to everything.
17	We do want to bring up, you know, our
18	friend at Curb who just spoke, it was pretty
19	enlightening. It's seems like the E-hail
20	providers would be asking for more money to
21	provide quality service, so from the
22	perspective, if you're eliminating Accessible
23	Dispatch with MTM to save money, but end up
24	having to provide a financial incentive to Curb
25	and others to provide a quality of service

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1	similar to what currently exists, then why are
2	we doing that in this first place?
3	We also wanted to mention that, you know,
4	just in our conversations today on group text
5	and amongst disability advocates who are
6	listening to this, you know, we appreciate that
7	E-hail providers think they can do this, but a
8	lot of people already have bad
9	TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.
10	MR. YANKEY: already have bad customer
11	service experience with the E-hail providers,
12	so there's not a lot of trust there that's
13	gonna happen.
14	We do have a lot more to say about the
15	training that would be required to be written
16	in to the rule for us to support a change like
17	this, but the training at MTM currently works,
18	people have good experiences with Accessible
19	Dispatch. People have had bad customer service
20	experiences with the E-hail providers who would
21	be taking over the service. So if we're making
22	the switch, if the E-hail providers are going
23	to be asking for more financial incentives
24	TIMEKEEPER: Time has expired.
25	MR. YANKEY: it doesn't seem like

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1	there's as much motivation to make this change.
2	We appreciate everybody and, obviously,
3	there is a lot more conversation we would want
4	to have. I think like me, all the other
5	disability advocates had prepared testimony
6	and, because we gave testimony based on what we
7	thought was gonna happen and then we received
8	new information during this meeting, people
9	really would like a chance to respond in more
10	detail to what we heard today, but we do
11	appreciate the fact that the Commission has
12	listened to us, and they're working with us, so
13	we look forward to those conversations going
14	forward.
15	Thanks so much.
16	CHAIR DO: Thank you, Evan, and I don't
17	think I committed to any of the financial
18	incentives that Curb has asked for, so let me
19	start there.
20	Actually, I was looking at the free
21	incentives, which is working with the quickie
22	pass, so that drivers who provide services to,
23	let's say the A.
24	Accessible Dispatch program will get a
25	front-of-the-line pass to the airport, and is
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that enough incentive.
But, yeah, I think we are on the same page
in terms of customer service and teeth. What
would you like to see in terms of enforcement
mechanisms for the TLC on the customer service
side?
I know I don't want to put you on the
spot, so if you want to think about it, I know
that we're going to meet in the future, so if
that's the case, that's okay too.
MR. YANKEY: I can just say a few things
off the top of my head. You know, one is that
we know that people we know that people with
E-hail providers are already having bad
customer service experiences, and in some cases
they're making complaints, if there are
channels to make those complaints. The
experience that Sharon Shapiro mentioned of
calling a customer service line and getting
hung up on because someone things your drunk or
you're doing a prank, you know Bernard
Carabello, who Joe mentioned in his testimony,
who was part of the group that helped shut down
Willowbrook State School in the '70s, you know,
I know of Accessible Dispatch because I work

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1	with him, and a couple times a week, I have the
2	work with Bernard to call a customer service
3	line and tell them, this person is not drunk,
4	do not hang up on them, they just speak
5	differently. So that's just a small example of
6	one of the things that we would like
7	enforcement on.
8	Obviously, the solutions that Joe
9	mentioned of having a dedicated customer
10	service staff of people who are talking to
11	people with disabilities all day, sort of
12	eliminates some of those problems, which is why
13	we're asking for it.
14	But we can think of a lot of things like
15	that, experiences like that, where we would
16	like enforcement, just common experiences that
17	people already have on customer service that we
18	want to make sure people aren't doing.
19	I will also just add, it can't all be
20	based on customer feedback. Some of the people
21	who currently use Accessible Dispatch because
22	of aspects of their disability or speech
23	differences, channels for making customer
24	service complaints are a barrier for them. So
25	you might be thinking about people with

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intellectual disabilities or other people who require staff support for using communication channels, those folks are less likely to go to a website and fill out a customer feedback form or make an additional call to do a customer complaint, so there has to be additional measures, other than just customers feedback.

One thing we know about MTM is, they do incorporate customer feedback, but they're also doing evaluations of their staff calls themselves. I believe they have some algorithmic ways of doing that, but they also have managers reviewing recordings of the call, so getting the Matrix that way and then being able to decide what sort of things we want to enforce if there's problems that are happening again and again would be part of it.

18 Obviously, all of this costs a lot of 19 money, as our friends at Curb have said, to 20 make this, you know, this sort of quality work, 21 so that would need to be worked. If you're 22 saying that you're gonna work it out, then we 23 want that to happen, we just want it written in 24 to the rules so we have a guarantee because we 25 know the current system works.

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1	CHAIR DO: That's fair.
2	Alright, any other questions from the
3	Commissioners?
4	COMMISSIONER BADER: Evan, do you guys
5	have much experience the Myle as a servicer?
6	MR. YANKEY: Yeah, so, you know,
7	obviously, I work for an independent living
8	center, so we get calls, as do some of our
9	colleagues who have given testimony today, so
10	we get lots of calls from people with
11	disabilities, we talk to people with
12	disabilities constantly. So, yeah, people have
13	had poor experience with Myle, in addition to
14	all the other E-hail providers, but, yes, even
15	just on this call, I've heard from people's
16	
10	poor experiences with Myle in particular. It's not to blame anyone, this is a tough job.
18	That's part of our point, is that, to get
19	quality service, you need money. MTM is
20	currently doing it with Accessible Dispatch,
21	maybe Myle would need more money to improve the
22	quality of service that isn't existing for
23	people yet.
24	COMMISSIONER BADER: Thank you.
25	MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

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1	Our next speaker today is Peter Mazer from
2	Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade.
3	Please unmute.
4	MR. MAZER: Good morning, Chairperson Do
5	and member of the Commission.
6	My name is Peter Mazer, and I am general
7	counsel to the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of
8	Trade, a seventy-year old association
9	representing owners and operators of licensed
10	New York City medallion taxicabs. We also
11	operate a full-service driver center that
12	provides an array of free services to drivers,
13	and our drivers provide thousands of taxicab
14	trips to persons with disabilities. We are
15	committed to providing accessible
16	transportation to the disability community.
17	One of the most significant changes
18	proposed on the rules under consideration is
19	the elimination of the existing Accessible
20	Dispatch program. In the statement, the basis
21	of purpose, the Commission states that the
22	elimination of this program would save the taxi
23	improvement funds about \$6 million a year,
24	which could be used to provide additional
25	hack-up funds for medallion owners.

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1	At the same time, the elimination of the
2	\$1 tip incentive to drivers that currently
3	receive for operating these vehicles. This
4	change alone would result in the reduction of
5	driver earnings of approximately five percent,
6	which would be further compounded, as news
7	reports recently indicated, taxicab ridership
8	is down because of the recently imposed
9	congestion tolling program.
10	Under today's proposals, drivers would
11	lose deadhead fees that they receive when they
12	accept accessible E-hail trips.
13	We fully appreciate the income and expense
14	stated that the TIF programs, as TLC has
15	provided in its annual report to the City
16	Council. We understand the current Accessible
17	Dispatch program is costly, but when it comes
18	to deciding whether to continue the existing
19	Accessible Dispatch program, there is much more
20	than merely financial considerations.
21	At the TLC's last public hearing, and
22	again today, the disability community spoke
23	loudly and clearly about the need for the
24	existing program to continue. Commissioners
25	heard that transferring this program to E-hail

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PROCEEDINGS 1 will provide a disservice to many in the 2 community who have come to rely on the existing 3 Accessible Dispatch program. Although the number of accessible vehicles 4 has increased and now exceeds 4,000, there are 5 those that say the service is needed and we б 7 encourage its continuation even if 8 modifications are necessary. 9 The TLC can explore ways to further reduce 10 the cost --11 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining. 12 MR. MAZER: -- including enlisting the 13 Mayor's office of Persons with Disabilities to 14 help advocate for adequate city funding for 15 this important program. The city has record 16 funding and it is not feasible to continue the 17 existing program, another program should be 18 replaced. Drivers' concerns must be addressed in 19 20 deciding how to provide accessible 21 transportation. You can have all Waaves you 22 want on the road, but if you don't provide 23 adequate incentives for drivers, the program 24 will not work. 25 Finally --

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PROCEEDINGS 1 TIMEKEEPER: Time has expired. 2 MR. MAZER: I just want to add, even 3 though my time is up, that we would be remiss if we did not address concerns of many of our 4 5 drivers. Our taxicab driver population is older and many of our drivers have disabilities б 7 themselves. There needs to be addressed in any overall program, the ability to deal with 8 9 drivers who have personal disabilities that 10 need to be addressed as well. 11 I thank you for this opportunity to speak, 12 and I look forward to hearing any questions or 13 comments you may have. Thank you. 14 MS. ELUTO: Thank you. 15 Our next speaker is Rasheta Bunting, 16 president of One Heart One Vision. MS. BUNTING: Good morning. Can you hear 17 18 me? 19 MS. ELUTO: Yes. MS. BUNTING: Okay, good morning, and 20 21 thank you for having me, Commissioners. My name is Rasheta Bunting, I am the vice 22 23 president of the National Federation of the 24 Blind of New York State. The National 25 Federation of the Blind is the largest

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blindnagg digability advegagy avaptigation in
blindness disability advocacy organization in
the country, and I'm also the president of the
One Heart One Vision, which is a grassroot
organization that provide services for blind
women locally.
Now, first of all, I do want to say thank
you for making an effort to meet our needs as
persons with disabilities, so the testimony
that I was going to say, I have to throw that
out, but I am gonna speak to the recent
events that you sprang upon us.
Like I said, I am a blind person. I also

12 13 have traumatic brain injury due to stroke, so I do suffer from aphasia. I want to speak about 14 15 the -- keeping the Accessible Dispatch line, or 16 if from -- it seems like you are gonna enact 17 the new customer service hotline. I want to 18 speak about the simplicity and how important it 19 is for blind persons and persons with cognitive disabilities, how important it is for us to 20 21 have that simplicity when using phone lines. This is what makes the current Accessible 22

> Dispatch hotline so appealing because it's very user friendly. You call a number, you speak to a person who understands your needs. With a

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1	person such as myself who do suffer from
2	aphasia, a lot of times, we can't get our
3	thoughts together, or at times depending on the
4	time of day, my speech is slurred and persons
5	with aphasia, speech are slurred.
6	Like some of my colleagues have expressed,
7	who recently spoke, we don't want to be
8	misconstrued for being drunk or confused. We
9	need people on this new line who understand our
10	needs and who are blessed with loads of
11	empathy.
12	Also, as a person who is blind and
13	discussing the ever-increasing numbers of blind
14	seniors or people who are new to blindness due
15	to injury or illness, it is important that we
16	don't get bogged down with the clutter.
17	TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.
18	MS. BUNTING: Okay. I'm just gonna draw
19	it to a close, simplicity is the best way, like
20	we have now, and that's why I'm imploring you
21	to, at least, think about the ease and user
22	friendliness of having a person who understands
23	our needs and a person who is blessed with
24	empathy and having a very similar phone line
25	for us to call, not dealing with many option.

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PROCEEDINGS 1 And thank you. 2 MS. ELUTO: Thank you. Our next speaker 3 today is Bhairavi Desai, from NYTWA. MS. DESAI: Good morning, Commissioner Do 4 5 and members of the Commission. I really appreciate that I've heard so б 7 many speakers today talk about the need to save 8 dispatch jobs and that, you know, and 9 articulate the importance of valuing workers 10 with specialized professional skills versus 11 automation. 12 All I can think as I'm hearing that is, 13 that's what we're asking for drivers. We're 14 saying, don't pit drivers against 15 accessibility. That is such a regressive position. We need to value that all drivers 16 17 are asking for is to be paid for their time, 18 their labor, and at a bare minimum, their 19 expenses. 20 But the approach that is being taken right 21 now, eliminating the \$1 per trip fee, 22 eliminating the operating cost, and even 23 eliminating the deadhead fee on these trips, on 24 the dispatch tips is incredibly regressive. 25 All workers have a right to a secure job

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1	and a dignified job. That means a job that is
2	not going to leave them in poverty, that's what
3	we're asking for. Same as the advocates are
4	articulating that for those who are engaged in
5	the dispatch jobs, that's what we're asking for
6	for the tens of thousands of men and women in
7	these streets who are behind the wheel. Nobody
8	working behind the wheel is getting rich out
9	there. The programs that we are asking to be
10	saved are so people can have a bare minimum
11	dignified survival, that they're not left in
12	debt, they're not forced into bankruptcy
13	because that is literally the edge of economic
14	turmoil that drivers in this sector have been
15	under for almost ten years.
16	Commissioner Do, the airport pass is a
17	terrible idea. More than ten years ago, this
18	city already tried it, and it failed miserably.
19	In fact, they tried it before these grants were
20	put in to place. There were protests at the
21	airport.
22	Drivers are not trying to outdo each
23	other, what they're trying to do is be
24	compensated for their time, their labor, and
25	their expenses. The City has to find a way to

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1	raise more money to supplement the TIF fund.
2	there is no way of getting around it.
3	TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.
4	MS. DESAI: I appreciate hearing the
5	advocates say that they would work with the
6	City. I wish they had done that in the
7	course of this litigation, something we
8	literality begged people for. We said that,
9	you know, these programs are gonna be cut for
10	drivers, just as right now the advocates are
11	concerned that the programs are gonna be cut
12	for the community.
13	The only way forward is for everybody on
14	both sides of this litigation to understand
15	that we need to find more funding and we need
16	to find a timeline that allows for that funding
17	to come through and for everybody to survive,
18	including the drivers themselves that are going
19	to perform these jobs and provide
20	TIMEKEEPER: Time has expired.
21	MS. DESAI: the service that we're all
22	debating. Thank you.
23	CHAIR DO: I have a quick question. So,
24	in previous testimony, you have recognized that
25	the TIF fund is insolvent, right, and that if

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PROCEEDINGS 1 we don't make these changes, that we would dig 2 ourselves in a deeper hole, and so we're being 3 proactive today. So, you know, knowing that, what can we do 4 5 that, in our current budget, that you think б might be best and appropriate to make sure that 7 we get on the better path next year? 8 MS. DESAI: Well respectfully, Commissioner, and I understand that you are in 9 10 a tough position, but respectfully, I don't 11 think you're being proactive. I think you're 12 all being reactive. 13 Proactive would mean that, right now in 14 budget season, on January 22nd, we would roll 15 up the sleeves and say, what are ways that we 16 find money so we don't have to cut out these 17 programs, that we talk to the State and as the governor is unveiling her budget, and say the 18 19 fifty cents from every taxi trip that, right 20 now, is not allocated to the MTA's capitol 21 programs and has been on the books since 2009, 22 long before anybody else contributed a dime to 23 the MTA, that we need that money to subsidize accessible taxi service, which is part of 24 25

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public transportation, and that budget is going

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1	to be voted on you know, it gets finalized
2	by the end of March, so we're not talking about
3	a long ways off. You know, the City's budget
4	with the Council is gonna be finalized at the
5	end of you know, by the end of June. We are
б	not talking about many months away. These are
7	things within our reach. I don't think we're
8	talking about a significant amount of money.
9	I really think we cannot operate in a
10	vacuum. We cannot see this you know, for
11	over ten years, Taxi Workers Alliance has
12	consistently said accessibility is an
13	opportunity, it's not a burden. And that's the
14	progressive approach to this issue. That means
15	we cannot do this in a vacuum.
16	I really appreciate Comptroller Lander's
17	remarks, but that means we need the comptroller
18	at the table, we need the Council at the table.
19	We need the Plaintiffs to recognize that maybe
20	shift you know, talking about fifty of all
21	medallions has shifted the economics for the
22	TLC in shaping these programs, and that it
23	doesn't really make sense to talk about fifty
24	percent of all medallions, if those medallions
25	are in storage. Fifty percent of active

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1	medallions really should be the target and
2	remain the priority that allows us to keep
3	these programs in place.
4	We need everybody to work cooperative,
5	that just hasn't happened from you know,
б	from my vantage point, it's part of why we even
7	submitted an amicus, we did not take a position
8	in our amicus, we were neutral because we
9	really tried to be the bridge between this City
10	and the advocates. A position that we
11	maintained for over ten years, a position that
12	we still hold today. That's the proactive way.
13	Keep these programs find other funding, you
14	know, come up with a timeline with the
15	advocates that have articulated through these
16	hearings that they understand the importance of
17	the dispatch program. I believe that means
18	they would also understand the importance of,
19	you know, preserving driver jobs, allowing the
20	taxis to be on the streets, you know, and not
21	driving people into bankruptcy and debt.
22	CHAIR DO: That's helpful. Thank you,
23	Bhairavi. I appreciate your time.
24	MS. DESAI: Thank you.
25	MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

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1	Our next speaker is Robert Acevedo.
2	MR. ACEVEDO: Right. I'm Robert Acevedo
3	from Disabled in Action.
4	Let's see. Again, with the Accessible
5	Dispatch program is an exercise in getting rid
6	of the human element, which many in New York
7	City rely on. While the mayor loves to talk
8	about how important the disabled are to the
9	City, I know that what the TLC proposes to do
10	is really all about the money.
11	The TLC was forced in Court to try to do
12	what they promised years ago, and Accessible
13	Dispatch is being done away with, again, to
14	save more money, according to the TLC.
15	Many visitors and other New Yorkers need
16	the human element of Accessible Dispatch to
17	request a vehicle. Now, I remember calling
18	Accessible Dispatch a few years ago, during
19	in order get my vaccine, it was snowing very,
20	very much, and I really appreciated that
21	they that the dispatcher said, oh, well,
22	don't worry you're gonna get to your
23	appointment, you will get there in time. That
24	was a great thing, it made me it lowered my
25	high blood pressure.

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PROCEEDINGS Finally, the TLC and its driver are 1 2 worried about saving money, like I said before, 3 but the human element is worth more than money. Many New Yorkers will miss the service, 4 5 including visitors, and let's see. We'll see the hypocrisy of the City as they are forced to б 7 maneuver through different prompts on different 8 apps and things like that. 9 And remember, not everyone has a 10 smartphone. 11 And my last thing is, if it's not broke, 12 don't throw it out. 13 Thanks a lot. Thanks for everything. CHAIR DO: Thank you, and I just want to 14 15 clarify that, there is still going to be a call 16 option with a live person via Accessible 17 Dispatch 2.0, and so, you know, I think the 18 comment that we're getting rid of Accessible 19 Dispatch is incorrect, right, in that, we are 20 now passing new rules to make sure that the 21 E-hail providers provide this 24/67 live 22 customer service. 23 Okay. Thank you. 24 MR. ACEVEDO: Thank you. 25 MS. ELUTO: Our next speaker is Walter

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1	Deane from Long Street Real Estate.
2	MR. DEANE: Thank you. My name is Walter
3	Deane, again. Thank you, Commissioner Do and
4	all the commissioners for having me and all
т 5	that you do.
6	I am just a regular taxi rider, and I am
7	very worried about the yellow taxi business in
8	New York City, as I see fewer cabs on the
9	streets, and those that are there are vacant
10	with their taxi lights on. Drivers tell me
11	everyday that their business is absolutely
12	terrible. The taxi E-hail business will not
13	succeed for those with disabilities if the taxi
14	business continues to struggle due to high
15	passenger costs and low driver compensation.
16	Taxis have become too expensive for the
17	regular commuters and the real issue that the
18	driver is that the drivers are not getting
19	the added fees despite their working
20	twelve-hour days.
21	Just to get into a taxi now costs over \$11
22	if I am in my east side neighborhood, which has
23	now been divided in half on 60th Street with
24	the new congestion demarcation line and can run
25	over \$16 if I'm going to the airports and \$30

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1	to Newark, this is without the trip even
2	starting. I tried to take a yellow cab on
3	Sunday and got out after nine blocks of
4	traffic, and the trip cost over \$21.
5	If those of you on the Commission have
6	spoken up against these fees that go to the
7	City and the State and not to the drivers, I
8	have not heard it, I have not seen anything
9	posted against these fees on the website or on
10	the Twitter page, and I have not heard anyone
11	speaking up against these fees and taxes this
12	morning or at the last hearing that I attended
13	via Zoom when you unanimously voted to raise
14	the fares which are destroying this important
15	business.
16	I challenge each of you on the Commission
17	to take taxis everyday at your own expense to
18	and from work to other commitments and to give
19	up your cars and parking placards, if you have
20	them. We the taxi drivers riders, including
21	the E-hail passengers with disabilities need
22	your support, as do the drivers.
23	Whatever amount is on the meter should go
24	to struggling drivers and yellow taxis should
25	be exempt from all bridge and tunnel tolls

PROCEEDINGS 1 which can be as high as \$18 and congestion fees 2 that are now 2.50, plus 75 cents south of 60th 3 Street, and improvement surcharges, and overnight surcharges, and rush hour surcharges, 4 5 et cetera. б I respectfully ask that you consider 7 having passenger representatives on the Commission, including those with disabilities, 8 9 who use the E-hail program. 10 A heartfelt thanks again for Commissioner 11 Do and the members of the Commission and to all 12 of the yellow taxi drivers who are out there 13 every day struggling. We, your devoted 14 passengers stand with you --15 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining. 16 MR. DEANE: -- and we appreciate all that 17 you do for our city. Thank you. 18 CHAIR DO: As always, thank you so much, 19 Walter, for your comments, both in my e-mails 20 and also here tonight. 21 MR. DEANE: Thank you. 22 MS. ELUTO: Thank you. Next speaker is 23 Michael Ring. 24 MR. RING: Hi, my name is Michael Ring, I 25 am the second vice president of Disabled in

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1	Action, and if anyone requires a verbal
2	description of my appearance, I'm a 61-year-old
3	white guy, who, I can see, needs a shave.
4	These new regulations that are proposed to
5	move forward, it's half a step forward and ten
6	steps backwards. We will be more accessible
7	cabs on the road but that's because of a
8	lawsuit, it's not any choices involved. I'm
9	glad the TLC is finally complying with that.
10	But there is no parts of these regulations
11	that are gonna ensure that drivers want to pick
12	up a person using a wheelchair. With the
13	removal of the being able to phone in and
14	have Accessible Dispatch send an accessible
15	vehicle, where drivers get an incentive,
16	drivers aren't gonna want to swing by and pick
17	us up.
18	Many times, I help people in wheelchairs
19	hail a yellow cab, and I stand at the curb and
20	hold up my arm and I've seen them Zoom away
21	when they see a wheelchair roll up, or person
22	in a wheelchair. It's they don't get paid
23	extra to get out of their vehicle and help
24	someone get into the back and secure them. And
25	most of the drivers are unable to secure a

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	PROCEEDINGS
1	wheelchair properly. Their training is
2	insufficient and they have no incentive to
3	actually figure out how to do it.
4	Also, I'm hearing that drivers are gonna
5	have the masked it's gonna be masked,
6	they're not gonna know they're on their way to
7	pick up someone who is using a wheelchair,
8	they're gonna zoom away when they see that
9	wheelchair.
10	A lot of drivers just don't want to do it.
11	They are required to get an accessible vehicle,
12	but they don't want to pick up people with
13	disabilities.
14	Also, the ability to call Accessible
15	Dispatch is great, but I'm hearing that all of
16	the different agencies, the different companies
17	that provide customer service will be required
18	to have a phone line. I'm in the accessible
19	I'm in the on-demand program with
20	Access-A-Ride, I make between 35 and 45 Uber
21	rides a month, I'm a heavy user, and I use
22	customer service and their customer service is
23	robots
24	TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining.
25	MR. RING: They don't have humans
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	PROCEEDINGS
1	responding to e-mails, it's just boilerplate
2	responses based on words, and when I actually
3	got to call someone, they had absolutely no
4	idea what I was talking about.
5	Accessible Dispatch, you're gonna get
6	someone in New York City who knows how to help
7	you. People aren't gonna want to use national
8	and international companies to get customer
9	service.
10	Thank you for your time.
11	MS. ELUTO: Thank you.
12	Our next speaker is Giuseppe Floccari.
13	MR. FLOCCARI: Hi, everyone, good
14	afternoon.
15	I would just like to say, the Accessible
16	Dispatch program does provide service 24 hours,
17	seven days a week. I know this because I've
18	used it all too many times. I have had nothing
19	but positive experiences with the program.
20	However, in reference to the dispatch line, I
21	do understand that you're, for now, not getting
22	rid of it, but I don't understand what the line
23	would be. Would it be an international number,
24	are you changing the phone number, will access
25	to 311, and the 311 would patch that call in to

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PROCEEDINGS 1 Accessible Dispatch? That's unclear to me, and 2 because that's unclear to me, it's unclear to 3 all people with disabilities. As I speak to you today, I'm also advocate 4 5 for people with disabilities. I am on the б board of DIA, and this is something that comes 7 up all the time. 8 I don't have an issue with my speech, but 9 there are people who do, and will they be able 10 to understand and provide service for people 11 who are not well spoken as I am. 12 Thirdly, will this new phase, if in 13 keeping or not keeping the Accessible Dispatch 14 program, will that entail job openings, 15 especially for people with disabilities. You 16 know, that is an issue for us, education and 17 medical are also big things in the disabled 18 community. Would that be a part of this new 19 phase? 20 So there are a lot of unanswered questions 21 from me as of right now, and I would just want 22 to say that, please consider keeping the 23 Accessible Dispatch program and the number. 24 It's not broken, please don't try to fix it 25 because people with disabilities don't really

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PROCEEDINGS 1 like things that are new because --2 TIMEKEEPER: Thirty seconds remaining. 3 MR. FLOCCARI: -- we are unable to justify 4 from the new to the old for some people. 5 Thank you. б CHAIR DO: Mr. Floccari, we are going to 7 keep the Accessible Dispatch number and that 8 will be one number that you will call and get 9 service from, we'll look into the 311 portion 10 as we move forward. 11 MS. ELUTO: Next speaker is Tucker 12 Salovaara. Please unmute your microphone and 13 begin. MR. SALOVAARA: My name is Tucker 14 15 Salovaara. I am (unintelligible) a system 16 where your -- is working. Not everyone will be 17 mobility have smartphones of know how to call a 18 customer line. Please keep the system the way 19 it is, and don't (unintelligible) working for 20 us. 21 Thank you. 22 MS. ELUTO: Thank you. 23 Our next speaker is Tendzin Tashi 24 (phonetic). Please unmute your microphone and 25 begin. Okay, we can come back to you.

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PROCEEDINGS 1 We will go to Richard Chow. Mr. Chow, you 2 can begin. 3 MR. CHOW: Hello, good morning. Can you 4 hear me? 5 MS. ELUTO: Yes, good morning. б MR. CHOW: I can't see my picture, I 7 cannot not see the picture. MS. ELUTO: I don't see it either. 8 But 9 why don't you, please, give your testimony. 10 MR. CHOW: Okay. Good morning, 11 Commissioner Do and everyone. My name is 12 Richard Chow, I am a member New York Taxi 13 Worker Union. We have concerning the TLC cutting the TIF 14 15 money from the driver, \$1 get the disability 16 trip, driver get empty hand to pick up the 17 disability service. We support the Waave 18 program in the City. We suffer so much 19 already. If the TLC cut the driver to lose 20 dollar trip, driver could lose \$3,000 to 4,000 21 a year. 22 So, when I meet the drivers at the JFK or 23 LaGuardia, drivers are all disappointed if that 24 TLC cut the disability TIF, and they pay the 25 driver MTA to cut the fare, so TLC take the

PROCEEDINGS

1	wages, money, driver not enough money to pay
2	the gas, the mortgage, the lease, repair, the
3	maintenance, the new car, it's Waave car is
4	very expensive for the trip. If the TLC cut
5	the program, this means they're forcing the
6	driver out from the job in bankruptcy.
7	The Commissioner Do, please help us to
8	reach this money from this firm, we are already
9	suffered so much in this business the Waave
10	program. We taxi driver collect more than
11	\$1 billion for the MTA and taxi also pay
12	through to the city sales tax so many, many
13	years. We are proud to be yellow cab driver
14	service in the City and in the five boroughs,
15	and we are proud to give the Access-A-Ride, so
16	please do not cut this money and let us
17	survive. Thank you so much.
18	MS. ELUTO: Thank you.
19	Our next speaker
20	CHAIR DO: None of these changes are in
21	relation to Access-A-Ride, only Accessible
22	Dispatch.
23	Thank you, Sherryl.
24	MS. ELUTO: Sure.
25	Next speaker is Terrence Page, president

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PROCEEDINGS of the Greater New York Council for the Blind. 1 2 MR. PAGE: Can you guys hear me? 3 MS. ELUTO: Yes. I'd like to thank you. 4 MR. PAGE: I'm Terrence Page, the president of the Greater New 5 York Council of the Blind. We have met with б 7 TLC, Cindi and others. I'd like to thank the 8 Commissioner and their entire team when they 9 came out to Cellis Manor (phonetic) to speak to 10 us about drivers ignoring the pick up of 11 persons with guide dogs in the late hours. 12 I am here to say, I would like this 13 program to be promoted more, most people in the 14 blind and visually impaired community are 15 unaware of this program. It would be great if 16 you did an outreach so these persons, who are 17 not smartphone users and don't use apps would 18 learn about this in the outer boroughs and 19 especially in Manhattan. This would be a 20 great, great program, and I don't think it 21 should be changed, and I appreciate the 22 Commissioner and his staff for what they're 23 doing. 24 Thank you. 25 MS. ELUTO: Thank you.

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PROCEEDINGS 1 The next speaker, we're going back to 2 Tendzin Tashi. Mr. Tashi, are you there, can 3 you unmute your microphone? 4 Yes, go ahead. 5 MR. TASHI: Hello, everyone. My name is б Tendzin Tashi, and I --7 FEMALE SPEAKER: Sorry, he's scared. I'm 8 his wife, Yudin (phonetic). Tendzin Tashi, he 9 is asking to go back to Uber drive, he used to 10 drive three years ago -- three years and then 11 after he was in the waiting list and he was 12 waiting, and he always tried to get back to the 13 job. He said he really want to work in the --14 drive Uber again. 15 CHAIR DO: Thank you. We'll follow up with Tendzin offline. This is a hearing on 16 17 Accessible Dispatch, but my team will follow up 18 with you and Tendzin offline. Thank you. 19 MS. ELUTO: That appears to be the end of 20 our speaker's list, and I turn back the hearing 21 to you, Commissioner. 22 CHAIR DO: Okay. Thank you so much to the 23 disability advocates for coming out and speaking about the Accessible Dispatch 24 25 programs. The pros of the existing program and

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PROCEEDINGS 1 how we can transform a new program to meet the 2 expectations of our advocates. We still have a lot of work to do. 3 We have meetings coming up and we will work with 4 5 our disability advocates, people with disabilities to make the changes even better, б 7 to incorporate into the rule the expectations 8 that you have for a program. 9 This is something that I heard loud and 10 clear today and it's something I'll work with 11 the Commission, all of our board of commissioners to make that a reality. 12 13 I also want to thank our other stakeholders across the taxi world who have 14 15 spoken today. Your feedback is incredibly 16 important, and we'll look at that feedback and 17 the written comments as we move on to make the 18 appropriate changes to this rule set to make it better for all stakeholders. 19 20 Thank you. The time is now 11:50 a.m., 21 and I'll call this public hearing to a close. 22 (Time Noted: 11:50 a.m.) 23 24 25

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1 CERTIFICATE 2 STATE OF NEW YORK ) ) ss: 3 COUNTY OF SUFFOLK ) 4 5 I, STEPHANIE O'KEEFFE, a Reporter and Notary 6 Public within and for the State of New York, do 7 hereby certify that the within is a true and accurate transcript of the proceedings taken on 8 January 22, 2025. 9 10 I further certify that I am not related to 11 any of the parties to this action by blood or 12 marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the 13 outcome of this matter. 14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my 15 hand this 22nd day of January, 2025. 16 17 <u>Stephanie Ok</u> 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

<b>\$1</b> 33:3 66:2 71:21 87:15	absurd 37:14	45:21,24 77:3 82:1 92:11 (9)
<b>88</b> :11 (5)		43.21,24 77.3 82.1 92.11 (9)
<b>\$11</b> 79:21	accept 50:3,7 66:12	active 4:3 75:25
	acceptance 52:12	actively 35:13
<b>\$16</b> 79:25	accepting 49:24 50:15 56:3	actual 38:17
<b>\$18</b> 81:1		
<b>\$21</b> 80:4	<b>access</b> 6:13 17:13 46:11 84:24 (4)	<b>actually</b> 40:22 60:20 83:3 84:2 (4)
<b>\$30</b> 79:25	accessaride 11:8 22:24 29:18	adams 19:20 20:4
<b>\$3000</b> 87:20	37:24 48:8 83:20 88:15,21 (8)	<b>add</b> 62:19 68:2
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