

In Re Commission Public Hearing NYC - Taxi & Limousine Commission
August 13, 2026

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2 NEW YORK CITY
3 TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION
4 DRIVER RELIEF PENALTY REDUCTION PROPOSAL AND UPDATES
5 TO MINIMUM RATE OF PAYMENT (MRP) RULES
6 PUBLIC HEARING

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8 33 Beaver Street
9 New York, New York 10004
10 August 13, 2026
11 10:11 a.m.

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H E L D B E F O R E :
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1 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Good morning,
2 everyone.

3 Can you all hear me?

4 (Chorus of yeses).

5 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Yes, okay. Welcome to
6 today's public hearing on a TLC rule
7 proposal. I am Chair and Commissioner Midori
8 Valdivia, and I am joined today by
9 Commissioners Bierstein, Mitchell, Velazquez,
10 and Sorrentino. I am also joined by Deputy
11 Commissioner for Licensing Aisha Richard, and
12 I am joined by Deputy General Counsel Alison
13 Hartwell. Thank you all for being here today
14 as we hear your comments on this proposed
15 rule package.

16 I believe we have how many speakers?

17 MODERATOR: Thirteen.

18 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thirteen speakers
19 confirmed to speak today, and we look forward
20 to hearing your perspectives, as we build a
21 TLC that better serves the public. I know
22 that for many of you, this means that you
23 took time out of your day to be with us, to
24 travel at times far into Manhattan, and so I
25 thank you for that. For many, this means

1 that you're not earning a trip, and you're
2 not earning a fare, and so I truly appreciate
3 that you're here to help shape this TLC with
4 us.

5 In my first days, one hundred days as
6 commissioner, I have focused on three
7 priorities; driver and passenger dignity,
8 corporate accountability, and building a
9 transportation system that works together.
10 To me and to our agency, these priorities are
11 not abstract. They will show up in the work
12 we do every day, and today's rule packages
13 addresses that first priority of driver
14 dignity.

15 I believe every TLC driver is also a
16 small business. These rules proposed today
17 are meant to make it easier for our drivers
18 to run their business, reducing unnecessary
19 fines and penalties. In the instances that
20 we are addressing today, drivers are already
21 suffering from the economic penalty of being
22 suspended, not being able to work, and so we
23 did want to reduce the financial burden on
24 our drivers.

25 This package importantly also includes

1 important medallion related relief, adding
2 flexibility to the program that many of you
3 work so hard for. Our medallion relief
4 program supplemental loan deficiency
5 guarantee has provided so much relief for the
6 over 2,000 medallion owners in our industry.
7 I believe this is just the beginning of our
8 efforts to provide relief for drivers. We
9 will continue to identify ways to save
10 drivers money without impacting our safety
11 and regulatory mission.

12 I want to be clear that TLC remains
13 committed to supporting our yellow taxi
14 drivers and medallion owners, including those
15 who are still working across the finish line
16 after years of financial pressure, and that's
17 why this rule package includes flexibility
18 within that medallion relief program. We
19 know that the work around medallion relief is
20 not done. We continue to work with partners,
21 stakeholders, to identify meaningful paths
22 forward for remaining medallion owners who
23 are eligible who still need relief.

24 At the end of the day, TLC drivers, all
25 of them, all of you, are integral to the

1 health of our overall transportation system,
2 providing nearly one million trips a day.
3 And there is nothing too small or too big to
4 consider when it comes to improving working
5 conditions, and every one of us benefit from
6 those improvements.

7 Now, on to today's agenda: In
8 accordance with Executive Order 11, a
9 directive from the Mayor to city agencies,
10 reporting to the Deputy Mayor for Economic
11 Justice, Julie Su, to reduce the economic and
12 regulatory burdens on drivers and small
13 business owners, we are proposing the
14 following changes to our rules:

15 Number one, elimination of the driver
16 license replacement fee of \$25. Let's help
17 drivers who have lost or damaged their
18 license to replace their license at no
19 additional cost and return to work. Number
20 two, elimination of a \$50 fine for drivers
21 who need to report the loss or theft of their
22 license, whether they have an unreadable
23 license or a license that does not match
24 their current appearance.

25 Please note that a driver who misuses

1 or allows another to misuse their license in
2 an attempt to deceive the public will still
3 be subject to other charges under the TLC
4 rules. Elimination of the \$200 fine for
5 drivers who take their annual drug test more
6 than 30 days late. As to driver's license is
7 already suspended, the driver will need to
8 pass a test in order to resume driving. We
9 do not need to add a fine on top of a period
10 of time where the driver is unable to work.

11 Number four, elimination of the fines
12 associated with missed inspections for
13 taxicabs and for-hire vehicles, which range
14 from \$100 to \$500. Both violations may
15 result in the suspension of a license until
16 compliance. And therefore, an additional
17 fine is not -- is an unnecessary burden on
18 our licensees. As I mentioned, the package
19 also includes important medallion related
20 relief.

21 Number one, TLC proposes further relief
22 to medallion owners participating in this
23 program by allowing them to transfer the
24 medallion and guarantee to immediate family
25 members. Number two, we also propose

1 allowing medallions of an existing
2 partnership that owns one or more medallions
3 to remove a partner from the entity upon
4 mutual agreement by all partners.

5 With that, I will now hand it over to
6 our Deputy General Counsel, Alison Hartwell,
7 to begin the public hearing.

8 MR. HARTWELL: Thank you, Commissioner.

9 Good morning, everyone, and welcome to
10 the TLC's public hearing. We have 19
11 confirmed speakers registered to speak today.
12 If you would like to speak and have not yet
13 signed up, please go to the desk located at
14 the entrance of this room, and our colleagues
15 from the Office of Community Affairs will
16 sign you up to speak. We ask all
17 participants to give due respect and
18 consideration to the folks offering their
19 statements.

20 We ask all speakers to provide remarks
21 relevant to today's rule proposal. If a
22 speaker is off topic, we will interject and
23 remind them to address today's rules. We
24 will call your name, and then you can step up
25 to the podium and begin your remarks. Each

1 speaker will be allotted three minutes to
2 speak. The time limit will be strictly
3 enforced. A thirty-second warning will be
4 provided, and then you will need to conclude
5 your testimony when your time limit is up.
6 There is a buzzer up here that will go off
7 when you have reached your time limit.

8 If a commissioner asks a speaker a
9 question about the remarks, the speaker will
10 be given one minute to respond. The rule
11 proposal was published in the City Record and
12 posted on our website on July 13, 2026, and
13 the public comment period ends today. The
14 video of this hearing and copies of all
15 written comments received through today will
16 be provided to the Commissioners prior to the
17 vote on these rules.

18 With that, we will begin our public
19 hearing, and we will call our first speaker
20 on the rule amendments.

21 MODERATOR: Elena Ferrera.

22 MS. FERRERA: Good morning,
23 Commissioners. I want to thank all of you
24 for the job that you do, especially staff for
25 the TLC.

1 I'm a driver. I've been driving for
2 ten years. I know you're going to hear from
3 other drivers here about the impact of the
4 cost of driving in the City of New York. I
5 especially ask the Commission to please
6 consider the inflation that we've been
7 suffering in the City, the cost of gas,
8 electricity, rent, food. I can go on, and I
9 know my colleagues can go on, so please take
10 all of this into account.

11 I do support the proposed changes, and
12 I am sure that my colleagues will as well,
13 but there may be other things that will help
14 relieve drivers from the burden of inflation.
15 I'm sorry. I didn't have a prepared speech,
16 so I apologize. I also ask the Commission to
17 look at the issue of inflation globally with
18 other city agencies to see where rules,
19 regulations, fines, and other burdens can be
20 considered with other agencies to make life
21 for New Yorkers a little bit more liveable.

22 And finally, I know this is not
23 necessarily the subject of the hearing, but I
24 wanted to just express the concern that I
25 think we all have here regarding self-driving

1 vehicles. It's a tremendous concern for all
2 drivers. If we allow that category of
3 vehicle to function here, that will impact
4 earnings, and the living for literally tens
5 of thousands of drivers, their families,
6 other businesses that in a way also thrive
7 from what it is that we do, so please take
8 that into account going forward.

9 Thank you so much.

10 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

11 (Applause).

12 MODERATOR: Augustine Tang.

13 MR. TANG: Hi, good morning.

14 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Good morning.

15 MR. TANG: Good morning, Commissioner
16 Valdivia and members of the Commission. My
17 name is Augustine Tang, and I'm a yellow
18 medallion owner, and also a member of
19 New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

20 I want to start by supporting TLC's
21 proposal to eliminate monetary fines and
22 missing drug tests, vehicle inspections, and
23 replacing of lost licenses. This is a good
24 change, and it should be the beginning of a
25 broader review of how TLC fines working

1 drivers. If a driver misses a drug test or
2 an inspection and the consequence -- I'm
3 sorry, consequences is already a suspension,
4 what purpose does an additional monetary fine
5 serve?

6 A suspension already means the driver
7 cannot work. That means no income. Adding a
8 fine on top of a lost income does not make
9 the public safer. It simply makes it harder
10 for the driver and their families to recover.
11 That means that same principle should apply
12 throughout TLC's rules. If a violation
13 already carries a suspension or revocation,
14 eliminate the additional monetary fine.

15 I also urge the TLC to reverse
16 increased penalty and points adopted last
17 year for repeated parking and lower level
18 moving violations. Driver already face
19 penalties for these violations through the
20 existing traffic enforcement system. TLC
21 should not add another escalating layer of
22 fines, points, mandatory classes, and
23 penalties that can ultimately threaten a
24 driver's ability to earn a living.

25 We are not asking TLC to ignore

1 violations or excuse unsafe driving. We are
2 asking for the penalties to be fair and
3 proportionate. The punishment should fit the
4 violation. TLC should also allow drivers to
5 provide proof of payment to the Department of
6 Finance for camera ticket settlements, not
7 just vehicle owners. And I ask TLC to review
8 the entire penalty schedule and reset fines,
9 so that they're proportionate to what drivers
10 actually earn. Enforcement should have a
11 purpose. It should protect the public and
12 correct dangerous behavior. It should not
13 treat licensed driver as a source of revenue.

14 I also want to briefly comment on the
15 proposed MRP changes. I was fortunate
16 enough --

17 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

18 MR. TANG: I was fortunate enough to
19 get into the MRP program. It allowed my
20 family -- for me and my family to keep my
21 father's medallion, which I still operate
22 today. I support allowing MRP loan and city
23 guarantee to transfer not just to the family,
24 but to another individual who owns six or
25 fewer medallions. Eventually, owners are

1 going to retire and need to sell. Expanding
2 who can assume the guaranteed loan --

3 (Speaker timer alarm).

4 MR. TANG: -- gives those owners a
5 larger pool of buyers, and gives another
6 small owner an opportunity to own a
7 medallion. Owners also should be able to
8 change individuals and LLC -- change between
9 individual and LLC owners losing a guarantee.
10 Sorry. Just really quick. There are places
11 where the rules can be changed without
12 compromising public safety while making real
13 difference to working drivers.

14 I hope the TLC continues in that
15 direction, and I thank you very much.

16 (Applause).

17 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

18 MODERATOR: Erhan Tuncel.

19 MR. TUNCEL: Good morning,
20 Commissioners, Chairperson Valdivia. My
21 printer broke, so I couldn't print it out.
22 Just give me a second, please. So, my name
23 is Erhan Tuncel, owner/driver for 28 years
24 and a member of New York Taxi Workers
25 Alliance. I want to begin with saying that

1 I'm in favor of elimination of fines for the
2 mentioned violations, so thank you for that.

3 I ask you, also, to ease the monetary
4 burdens and eliminate the points for
5 TLC-issued parking and nonhazardous
6 violations, which were recently adopted. I
7 will also take this opportunity to ask you to
8 use TLC enforcement as more of a carrot than
9 a stick for legitimate licensed drivers, and
10 use their resources to go after illegal
11 hustlers at the airport, as well as on the
12 streets.

13 Now, on MRP rule changes, which is very
14 important for us. We are forever grateful to
15 Mayor Mamdani for spearheading the Medallion
16 Relief Program and what MRP has accomplished.
17 For us, we cannot wait for the day our
18 friends who are left behind get the same
19 relief they deserve. As for the MRP rule
20 changes the Commission has proposed, I must
21 say it does not go far enough. Thousands of
22 owner/drivers with medallions governed by MRP
23 rules need an immediate relief from paying an
24 additional 15.3 percent self-employment tax
25 every year.

1 I paid about \$6,000 in self-employment
2 taxes both for 2024 and 2025. That's a lot
3 of money for someone who works 60, 70 hours
4 to make 35 to \$40,000 after expenses. MRP
5 rule changes must allow individual owners to
6 transfer their medallions into corporations
7 for immediate relief. For these type of
8 transfers where a medallion owned by an
9 individual being transferred into
10 corporations owned by the same individual,
11 please simplify the process, so we don't have
12 to spend thousands of dollars in transfer
13 costs.

14 And also, rule changes must allow
15 transfer of medallions to any individual who
16 would qualify under MRP rules, so we don't
17 have to just walk away when it's time to hang
18 our gloves to retire. We need to be able to
19 sell our medallions to collect what little
20 equity we have built up to help us in our
21 retirement.

22 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

23 MR. TUNCEL: I'm almost 67, diabetic
24 man with neck and back problems. I'm going
25 to have to retire sooner than later. There

1 are hundreds, if not thousands of
2 owner/drivers in my shoes today. I urge you
3 to make necessary changes to MRP rules, to
4 allow individual medallions to be transferred
5 into corporations, so that we can avoid
6 paying an additional 15.3 percent tax, which
7 translates into thousands of dollars savings
8 for us every single year. I also urge you to
9 allow the medallion transfer to individuals
10 who would qualify for MRP, so we can sell our
11 medallions if we choose to.

12 Thank you very much for your time.

13 (Applause).

14 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

15 MODERATOR: Michael Simon.

16 MR. SIMON: Good morning,
17 Commissioners.

18 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Good morning.

19 MR. SIMON: I feel like I'm a little
20 out of place here, because I'm a pure
21 medallion owner representative, okay? So, my
22 point of view is pure medallion owner.

23 Fee support are more capable
24 commission. With new tech, we need new
25 regulatory oversight, especially when it

1 comes to variable pricing. These fees are a
2 small fraction of what is needed for a taxi
3 driver, and only a toll congestion to a
4 sinking ship. We need more. Mayor Mamdani
5 rode a taxi to inauguration, but there has
6 been no improvement in taxi drivers' lives.

7 Here's an option: TLC could be used to
8 initiate a driver-owned corporative e-hail
9 app, driver-owned, the New York City taxi
10 app. TL fees could be used to study how a
11 metered rate plus a \$5 pick-up charge for an
12 e-hail could increase taxi drivers' income.
13 Of the \$5 pick-up fee, \$4 would go to the
14 driver and \$1 to the co-op for driver
15 benefits. A taxi driver app cooperative
16 could provide health insurance, vacation,
17 sick leave, down time, as well as
18 substantially raise driver income.

19 I respectfully petition the Commission
20 to consider my proposal for New York City
21 driver-owned cooperative taxi app. TL fees
22 could make this possible. A taxi
23 driver-owned e-hail app with no shared
24 profits to big corp. I sincerely petition
25 for our own app, the New York City taxi app

1 owned by taxi drivers. I have submitted the
2 proposal in writing for you to review.

3 Commissioner Valdivia, here is a chance
4 to initiate something that will have a real
5 effect on taxi drivers' incomes. Thank you
6 very much.

7 (Applause).

8 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

9 MODERATOR: Richard Chow.

10 MR. CHOW: Hello. Good morning.

11 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Good morning.

12 MR. CHOW: Good morning, Commissioner
13 Midori Valdivia and all members. My name is
14 Richard Chow, so I'm a member of the New York
15 Taxi Workers Alliance, and I have been
16 driving the yellow cab for 20 years. And the
17 Medallion Relief Program is very important to
18 the yellow cab industry. We want MRP after
19 the years of the struggling under the
20 medallion debt.

21 My brother Kenny dies by suicide
22 because of the -- he could not afford to pay
23 his medallion loan. For years, the New York
24 Taxi Workers Alliance owned the street fight
25 and the debt crisis. Finally, after demands,

1 along 24/7 camp outside the New York City
2 Hall, 15-day hunger strike, we won the
3 medallion Relief Program and the City backed
4 guarantee.

5 I'm only the lucky one, the driver who
6 was able to restructure my loan, the MRP
7 program, to lower monthly cost my medallion
8 mortgage has been life-changing. It has mean
9 I can survive and keep my medallion. And I
10 know that if anything were happen to me, I
11 would not have to worry about my debt. The
12 propose -- the rules are important because it
13 allow us to transfer the loan to the people,
14 our people. However, they should not limit
15 transfer to the spouse and children.

16 Many people won't have -- don't have
17 immediately family member because who want to
18 take over the loan. For example, my children
19 do not want to drive, and my wife think
20 driving is so dangerous. And if I was
21 allowed to transfer to anyone to less than
22 six medallion, I could find someone to take
23 over my loan when I was ready to retire. Not
24 only would this wider rule benefit driver,
25 but this would be benefit to the City, too.

1 If the loan cannot be transferred, driver
2 have to default. And if you want to retire
3 to or force to stop driving, and the City has
4 to pay through the --

5 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

6 MR. CHOW: City backed guarantee. With
7 the transfer of the loan, the balance
8 continue to get smaller because the new owner
9 will be keeping the loan. The TLC also let
10 transfer happen to driver behind the loan so
11 long that lender agree to pay the payment
12 plan. Sometimes driver are forced to stop
13 driving immediately because of the illness or
14 life settlement --

15 (Speaker timer alarm).

16 MR. CHOW: Give me a few seconds. And
17 cannot afford to pay the loan, they should be
18 still allowed to transfer their loan. TLC
19 must also allow the people to transfer the
20 loan if they are change ownership by forming
21 a TSC or LLC or corporation, getting rid of
22 the LLC or corporation and transfer to the
23 loan name. There's no downside to this. The
24 MRP program have been lifesaving for yellow
25 cab drivers and their family. The TLC must

1 do everything it can do to expand the benefit
2 available to make the yellow cab industry
3 stable, and the driver can continue to
4 benefit from this important program.

5 Thank you so much.

6 (Applause).

7 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

8 MODERATOR: Lloyd Dinma.

9 MR. DINMA: Members of the public, my
10 fellow TLC drivers, Madam Commissioner, I
11 salute you all.

12 I remain indifferent to this proposal
13 to remove the drug test fines. Why? I
14 believe the TLC, the Taxi and Limousine
15 Commission, is currently in violation of
16 Mayor Mamdani's Executive Order Number 11.
17 The stipulation is to review all fines, all
18 fee pertaining to small business owners to
19 alleviate burdens. Here's the elephant in
20 the room: The TLC should not have an annual
21 monetary drug test policy in the first place,
22 plain and simple.

23 Why? As far as this policy is both
24 unnecessary and ineffective, it is burdensome
25 and extortionary in nature to the drivers. I

1 say "unnecessary," because not even the NYPD
2 drivers who patrol and deal with the public,
3 nor school bus drivers who shuttle our kids
4 to school, nor the MTA employees who daily
5 commute hundreds of thousands of people
6 daily, have this policy in place, not even
7 corporate America, yet all these groups
8 remain functional.

9 So, I say ineffective because effective
10 drug testing necessitates that the drug test
11 is administered randomly. Yet, this is a
12 test that amusingly is scheduled at a certain
13 time window every year. The time, date, and
14 venue are selected at the driver's
15 convenience. So, it is quixotic to expect a
16 driver who has ingested banned substances
17 would select a test when he or she is under
18 the influence. It's not practical. Or won't
19 take steps to temporarily abstain from such
20 substances when they take the test.

21 Note worthy, this test is not even a
22 deterrent from such indulgence. After
23 passing the test, the driver is free to
24 completely reengage in the behavior. So, the
25 current proposal to eliminate the drug test

1 fines is precarious at best. The question
2 begs to be asked, why have this test? Why
3 are TLC drivers so different from the NYPD,
4 the MTA, the school bus system personnel?
5 They aren't.

6 Labcorp, the corporation that
7 administers this test, charges roughly about
8 \$35 for each and every one of the two hundred
9 thousand drivers, active drivers, in New York
10 City. I have an MBA. Doing the math, we're
11 talking \$7 million annually to Labcorp. Over
12 the course of the nine years that I have been
13 a TLC driver, we're talking \$60 million to
14 this corporation. This is highly
15 unacceptable. So, drivers could have
16 benefited for this \$60 million to collective
17 causes -- bathrooms for us, union fees, all
18 kinds of things. Why Labcorp?

19 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

20 MR. DINMA: Moving forward, there are
21 two credible options: The TLC should
22 elucidate the effectiveness of this drug test
23 to the public. Also, release the percentages
24 and records of all Einsteins who fail this
25 test. No one fails this test, pretty much.

1 Only then move forward, or else the TLC
2 should pay for this test, and also pay for
3 the driver's time off, because drivers who
4 work daily shifts cannot work on that day.
5 They have to come and take time off from
6 their day off. It's just not fair.

7 So, it's not just impressive that this
8 test be scrapped, right?

9 (Speaker timer alarm).

10 MR. DINMA: There should be an
11 investigation to find out how this test came
12 to be deemed effective and necessary. Who
13 were the officials that authorized the test?
14 I personally smell kickbacks and a
15 corruption.

16 Thank you very much.

17 (Applause).

18 CHAIR VALDIVIA: I'd like to ask a
19 question, sir. Sir, do you mind coming back
20 up? I'd like to ask a question, if that's
21 okay. Thank you so much.

22 So, are you recommending random drug
23 tests? Because I just wanted to understand
24 kind of what you would want.

25 MR. DINMA: Okay. Initially, when I

1 spoke to your predecessor, he e-mailed me
2 back. I have e-mail records. He said that
3 if we had random drug tests, like proposed
4 there, that people would complain. I won't
5 complain. I don't think anybody would
6 complain. Because as this test stands right
7 now, it is very similar in motive to
8 President Trump's Muslim ban, which is to
9 target the nefarious subgroup of people, you
10 target the entire broader group of people.
11 You subject them to draconian treatment.

12 Most TLC drivers are very honest
13 working, hard-working immigrants. A very few
14 of them take drugs, and I have never met any.
15 So, this test, I mean --

16 CHAIR VALDIVIA: And I just want to
17 clarify. I can only do that because it's
18 family. My husband is a train operator, and
19 he takes a random drug test every year.

20 MR. DINMA: Exactly. My friend, too,
21 as well, yes.

22 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Yeah. So, I just
23 wanted to clarify that. Thank you so much.

24 (Applause).

25 MODERATOR: Sonam Ghising Lama.

1 MR. LAMA: Hello. Thank you. Good
2 morning, Commissioner Midori, TLC leadership,
3 and everyone here today. My name is Sonam
4 Ghising Lama, organizing deputy director at
5 Independent Drivers Guild. I'm here today
6 with our IDG members to represent the
7 hard-working drivers who keep New York City
8 moving.

9 First, I want to congratulate
10 Commissioner Midori on your leadership at
11 TLC, and thank you and your team for taking
12 this important step to reduce unnecessary
13 fines and penalties. We appreciate you
14 listening to drivers. This is a good start.
15 The proposed elimination of certain fines is
16 very important. When a driver is already
17 suspended from missing deadline, adding
18 another 200 up to 500 fines creates an
19 impossible financial burden. A suspension
20 already means drivers cannot work, and they
21 already lost the money.

22 I have much more. I just heard about
23 fellow drivers stating about brother issues
24 because of the loan here and there. I want
25 to make this attention to all the leadership

1 here that same thing is happening for our
2 FHV, now all the Uber and Lyft drivers. What
3 is that is an E-ZPass debt and penalties.
4 Drivers are facing \$40,000, \$70,000, and I
5 have one driver here with \$17,000 fine from
6 E-ZPass. I don't want TLC just be silence
7 with this. We have driver advocates. We
8 have our members. You are all out here. We
9 have elected officials. Let's work together
10 to do something for E-ZPass, so that we don't
11 have to have another brother who lost their
12 life. We can prevent lives. This is very
13 important.

14 At the same time, I also wanted to
15 address some of the things, the bus lane
16 tickets the drivers are facing. I know it's
17 out of topic, that's why I don't want to
18 emphasize. But having said that, as a driver
19 advocate at IDG, we hear these kind of
20 questions every single day directly from our
21 drivers. We need TLC, DOT, and driver
22 advocates to work together urgently. We also
23 need to move forward with inter 1000. Driver
24 need relief now.

25 We need bathroom, right?

1 (Chorus of yeses).

2 MR. LAMA: TLC and driver advocates can
3 do more. We can do it faster when we work
4 together in solidarity. Our drivers work
5 long hours, support their families, pay their
6 taxes, and keep this city moving. They
7 deserve policies --

8 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

9 MR. LAMA: -- that recognize the
10 reality of their lives. So, today I'm asking
11 for actions and partnerships, not just
12 discussion. Let's bring TLC, DOT, elected
13 officials, and driver advocates together to
14 find actual solutions protecting drivers.

15 Thank you, Commissioner Midori.
16 Congratulations again on your new leadership,
17 and thank you to the entire TLC team. This
18 is a good start. Now, let's keep going and
19 doing what is right for our drivers. Thank
20 you.

21 (Applause).

22 MODERATOR: Mohamed Mohamed.

23 MR. MOHAMED: Good morning, everyone.
24 And good morning, Commissioner Valdivia. My
25 name is Mohamed Mohamed. I have been driving

1 since 1988. I am proud to be a member of
2 NYTWA. I support removing the fine for drug
3 test, missed inspection, and lost license. A
4 suspension already takes away our income.
5 There is no need for fine on top of it.
6 Please also remove the extra points and
7 higher fines for parking and nonhazardous
8 tickets. Accept DOF proof for all drivers,
9 not just owners, and make fines match what
10 drivers actually earn. These are good
11 changes, but only if they are the beginning.

12 Our main demand is this: Stop seeing
13 drivers as easy target. Stop treating us
14 like cash register or ATM machine for the
15 City. We deserve respect. In just three
16 fines, you'll make \$1 million from us. TLC
17 revenue should not come from us. It should
18 come from fining billionaires company, like
19 Uber and Lyft, when they cheat drivers, and
20 from enforcement against illegal unlicensed
21 and out-of-state cars that's flooding all
22 five boroughs, destroying our industry. Do
23 that, and TLC will have legitimate income.
24 You will have a justice, and you will have
25 streets that are actually fair.

1 My fellow drivers and I are tired being
2 treated like criminal, while company robbing
3 us are treated like clients. Uber and Lyft
4 cheat us every single day. In the beginning,
5 Uber choose to take commission, 25 percent.
6 Now, with upfront pricing, they charge us up
7 to 60 percent of every fare. This is not a
8 commission. This is a wage theft. They
9 control our pay. They control our time. And
10 they deactivate us without any hearing,
11 without any pay, without due process. They
12 have all the power of an employer with amount
13 of responsibility.

14 For many drivers, this feels like
15 modern day enslavement. So, instead of
16 fining drivers \$1 million of paperworks, I
17 demand to impose huge fines on Uber and Lyft
18 when they're cheating the drivers.

19 (Applause).

20 MR. MOHAMED: That's legitimate income.
21 That's legitimate income, this is the
22 justice: Enforce the illegal cars enforce on
23 the abusive apps, not on the licensed
24 driver --

25 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

1 MR. MOHAMED: -- who built the City.
2 We are licensed. We are insured. We are
3 inspected, and we follow your rules.

4 Thank you, Midori. Union power --
5 (Applause -- driver power).

6 MODERATOR: Hector Germain.

7 MR. GERMAIN: (Speaking in Spanish
8 dialect).

9 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

10 MR. GERMAIN: (Speaking in Spanish
11 dialect).

12 (Speaker timer alarm).

13 MR. GERMAIN: (Speaking in Spanish
14 dialect).

15 (Applause).

16 CHAIR VALDIVIA: I'm not really sure if
17 the record will be translated, but I just
18 wanted to highlight the three issues. It was
19 around automated camera enforcement around
20 bus lanes, specifically the growth of the
21 number of bus lanes with the camera
22 enforcement and the tickets that drivers are
23 getting. Second was around insurance and
24 cost concerns are insurance. The third was
25 around plates, specifically around

1 lease-to-own, maybe, contracts, and concerns
2 around what's happening with lease-to-own,
3 and how people do not get to secure plates
4 after that lease-to-own contract. And then,
5 revising fees, and then a discussion around,
6 concern around new technologies on our
7 streets.

8 Okay. Thank you very much.

9 MODERATOR: Angel Miqui.

10 MR. MIQUI: Good morning. Hi, how are
11 you? My name is Angel Miqui. I've been
12 driving yellow cab, and I'm an owner. I've
13 been driving since 1987. And I have a
14 partner owner, and my partner is a little
15 old, he have a heart surgery, knee surgery,
16 diabetic, and I had the relief program. And
17 I tried to remove his name from the program
18 and leave my name on, but they don't want me
19 to do it, because they say the program cannot
20 alterate the paper, and I just want to get
21 help. If you can do it, you know, that I can
22 remove his name, you know.

23 And I'm a driver since 1987. I've been
24 working airport, tourist, hospital. I do all
25 my best that I can do, giving service to the

1 people, and my car has to be retired next
2 year. I just have a six-month extension, but
3 they say I no apply for the pilot program. I
4 have to change the car. And I would like --
5 I'm a 67-year-old. I just would like to do
6 the recognition for, you know, like people
7 has a age, it's hard to move those
8 wheelchair, you know.

9 And that's one of the reasons I'm here,
10 because I'm looking for the help, you know.
11 I'm moving all the way around, I talking, and
12 they all say the same thing. I just want if
13 you people here, you know, can do that
14 helpful, those people need it. And see if
15 can you do something with, like those fare
16 that people call for Access-A-Ride, the
17 e-hail call, their price is incredible. If
18 you're looking, they rip off, you know, like
19 the driver. They get like 85 percent, and
20 they give like a 20 percent to us.

21 CHAIR VALDIVIA: My I ask what is the
22 fare that you get for an Access-A-Ride trip?

23 MR. MIQUI: Well, the fare for
24 Access-A-Ride trip I get like from Brooklyn
25 to Manhattan, sometimes they want only pay

1 like a \$30 fare, instead of \$55 or \$60, you
2 know. And I talk to the company a lot of
3 times about that, you know. They said,
4 that's what a computer, all of this and all
5 of that, you know. But it's not working
6 right the way they do it.

7 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Okay.

8 MR. MIQUI: I appreciate that. Thank
9 you for letting me talk, and have a nice day.
10 (Applause).

11 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

12 MODERATOR: Kamal Ahmed.

13 MR. AHMED: Good morning. My name is
14 Kamal Ahmed. I represent members of New York
15 City Bangladeshi Drivers Community. I'm also
16 an insurance advocate, and I work to raise
17 voices of drivers, so the policymakers and
18 public understand how hard they work every
19 day -- the drivers every day is charged to
20 support their families.

21 First, I appreciate the purpose of
22 Medallion Relief Program, MRP, and financial
23 assistance it has provided to medallion
24 owners who have faced serious economic
25 hardship. However, I have an important

1 concern regarding the proposed rules for
2 transferring medallion under the MRP program.
3 The proposed rule would allow certain owners
4 to transfer their medallions to immediate
5 family members, subject to lender approval
6 and requirements, but I believe TLC can go
7 further.

8 Many medallion owners have spent years
9 and sometimes decades working long hours
10 making loan payments and building equity in
11 their medallions. Not every medallion owner
12 has a spouse or child who wants to take over
13 the medallion or who can qualify the loan.
14 Therefore, I respectfully ask TLC to consider
15 allowing an MRP medallion to be transferred
16 and sold to a qualified third-party
17 purchaser, provided that the purchaser meets
18 TLC requirements, and the participating
19 lender approves an appropriate financial
20 agreement.

21 The Medallion Relief Program was
22 created to help struggling owners recover
23 financially. A relief program should not be
24 a lock-in program. Medallion owners have
25 worked for years to build value in their

1 medallions. Their ability to realize that
2 value and stake should be protected. TLC can
3 protect the financial integrity of the MRP
4 program, while also protecting the economic
5 rights and interest of medallion owners. I
6 respectfully ask the Commission to consider
7 this issue carefully before adopting the
8 rules.

9 Thank you for giving me the opportunity
10 to speak here today.

11 (Applause).

12 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

13 MODERATOR: Michele Dottin.

14 MS. DOTTIN: Good morning,
15 Commissioners. I'm standing here with a
16 heavy heart. I'm listening to all of the
17 issues that the drivers have, right? We're
18 all drivers. We're all being subjected to
19 all of the issues happening. Everyone, every
20 agency has a hand in their pockets and our
21 pockets, right? But I agree with all of the
22 fees to be removed, but I actually agree with
23 him as far as random drug testing, rather
24 than yearly drug testing. It makes more
25 sense.

1 If you really want to see if a driver
2 is doing what he's supposed to be doing
3 correctly, then a random drug test. It's
4 worked for MTA for years. It's worked for
5 companies for years, and it's something that
6 will give the public more of assurance that
7 these drivers are driving, you know, in the
8 manner they're supposed to be, safely and not
9 under the influence. So, random drug testing
10 should be. Removing the extra fine,
11 absolutely, right. There's no need to punish
12 the drivers more with what they have already
13 been subjected to.

14 The other thing I want to address, and
15 we have been dealing with this since
16 before -- since 2018. We are talking about
17 medallion owners being able to transfer their
18 plates, be able to move. Our FHV drivers,
19 when they're leasing, they're subjected to
20 held by the leasing companies because they
21 cannot get a plate. They can't transfer the
22 plate. They can't -- but the medallion --
23 the leasing companies can keep the plate and
24 transfer to somebody else, another driver.

25 Right now, the fees that they're

1 charging the drivers just to keep the plate,
2 so that they can continue driving after they
3 pay off the car is \$400 a week, not a month,
4 a week. And then, we have drivers who's
5 owned their plates, who've become elderly and
6 have family members who are drivers. They
7 can't transfer their plates to the family
8 member, so then they have to do illegal
9 things, and we want to avoid that. So, how
10 about we think about adjusting it, so that
11 people who own --

12 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

13 MS. DOTTIN: -- their plate, who have
14 been buying, you know, paying this off for so
15 long, be able to also allow their family
16 members to keep it. I'm not saying a friend,
17 right? I'm saying family members, someone
18 who's been sharing the plates with them,
19 somebody who has benefited, who has also
20 helped that driver continue. Because when
21 they get older, there's no savings. Where's
22 the savings, right? So, let's figure out how
23 we can help them out, so that when that
24 family member is using the plate --

25 (Speaker timer alarm).

1 MS. DOTTIN: -- continually, they can
2 also help them to survive going through times
3 and struggle.

4 And with the bus lane, it's really
5 unfair. \$250 every time -- snap, snap, snap.
6 Where are they going to drop off the riders?
7 They can't get to the curb. The bus lane is
8 the only option because you have a bike lane
9 next to the curb. What are we doing? How
10 are we doing safety? Where is the safety for
11 the rider? Let's figure this out. Let's
12 work together. Let's make it reasonable and
13 responsible movements when it comes to these
14 drivers.

15 I'm telling you, we have sleepless
16 nights worrying about the drivers. But let's
17 figure out how we can make the leasing
18 companies more accountable. We can have
19 random drug testings, so that it is done and
20 you can tell that drivers are not under the
21 influence. But again, moving all those fees
22 would be fantastic. Thank you.

23 (Applause).

24 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

25 MODERATOR: Andrew Greenblatt.

1 MR. GREENBLATT: Good morning,
2 Commissioner Valdivia and members of the Taxi
3 and Limousine Commission. My name is Andrew
4 Greenblatt, and I'm the policy director of
5 the Independent Drivers Guild, or IDG. We
6 represent more than 140,000 for-hire vehicle
7 drivers in New York. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to testify today in strong
9 support of the proposed rules to reduce and
10 eliminate unnecessary fees and penalties for
11 our city's drivers.

12 This rule package represents a common
13 sense shift in regulatory policy. It
14 directly aligns with the Mayor's Executive
15 Order 11, which mandates that city agencies
16 identify and eliminate regulatory burdens
17 that create exactly these kinds of undue
18 hardships. Drivers live on incredibly thin
19 margins, and regressive fines act as a direct
20 counterproductive tax on their livelihoods.

21 We strongly applaud the elimination of
22 the \$200 fine for late annual drug testing,
23 the \$100 to \$500 fines for missed vehicle
24 inspections. And from a structural
25 standpoint, these monetary fines are

1 completely redundant since the enforcement
2 mechanism. A license suspension already
3 works, so the safety issues are already being
4 dealt with. Furthermore, eliminating the \$25
5 license replacement fee and the \$50
6 administrative fines for unreadable or lost
7 licenses removes unfair friction points,
8 preventing drivers from returning to work,
9 which is what we all want.

10 We appreciate that the commissioners
11 are focused on ensuring that drivers can make
12 a living and support a family doing this
13 work. Now, we urge you to keep going. In
14 April, and at Commissioner Valdivia's
15 request, we submitted a memo, which included
16 other fees and fines that should be
17 eliminated. I've submitted that into written
18 testimony for this, if anybody would like to
19 read those other suggestions.

20 We're glad to see some of those are
21 being addressed today, but there are many
22 more, and we urge you to look at that memo.
23 More importantly, in May, we submitted a
24 letter calling on the TLC to raise minimum
25 pay rates to reflect the jump in insurance

1 and gasoline prices. Insurance rates jumped
2 over 14 percent this year, and the governor's
3 office timed that, so you could react to that
4 before this year's rate increases, but the
5 TLC didn't.

6 Gasoline prices also jumped, have
7 jumped by over 30 percent. By adjusting pay
8 only at the rate of a broad index inflation,
9 the average pay for drivers has now fallen
10 below minimum wage. Even the IRS under
11 President Trump has recognized that these are
12 extraordinary times for drivers, and they've
13 made a rare --

14 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

15 MR. GREENBLATT: -- midyear adjustment
16 to mileage rates. The TLC should follow
17 suit. I've submitted -- as I said, I've
18 submitted the first memo. We've also
19 submitted that letter as written testimony.
20 We urge the Commission to swiftly adopt these
21 proposed rule changes and to keep going.

22 Thank you for your time and your
23 consideration.

24 (Applause).

25 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

1 MODERATOR: Peter Mazer.

2 MR. MAZER: Good morning, Members of
3 the Commission. My name is Peter Mazer, and
4 I'm general counsel to Metropolitan Taxicab
5 Board of Trade.

6 Since 1952, we've been advocates for
7 medallion owners, operators, and drivers, and
8 we regularly represent licensees of all types
9 in administrative proceedings. The rules
10 before the Commission today are a first
11 attempt and a good attempt to comply with the
12 Mayor's Executive Order Number 11. The order
13 requires a review of licensing fees and
14 penalties and procedures, to see how they
15 affect small businesses.

16 With respect to the rules before you
17 today, we support them all, but we would like
18 to add a couple of comments with regard to
19 them. First, we support the elimination of
20 the fine, the fee for replacing a lost or
21 stolen license, but we urge that the
22 Commission continue to keep in place
23 appropriate safeguards to ensure that there's
24 no fraud or misuse of lost or stolen
25 licenses.

1 We support the elimination of the fee
2 for the elimination -- for the missed vehicle
3 retirement inspection, as long as the
4 procedures remain in place to not impose any
5 suspension until after a hearing. We have
6 had instances where people have received
7 violations for missed inspections, where we
8 were able to take them to hearing and
9 adjudicate them at the hearing, and the
10 penalties were eliminated. We ask that in
11 those cases where summons are issued in error
12 that no suspension be imposed until an
13 adjudication takes place.

14 With respect to the Medallion Relief
15 Program, we support the changes that we have
16 heard about, and we know that a number of our
17 drivers now will have the opportunity to
18 exercise proper estate planning, and will be
19 able to utilize the Medallion Relief Program.
20 However, one of the things that the executive
21 order addresses is the -- is providing relief
22 to all small businesses. Now, drivers and
23 individual owners of vehicles and medallion
24 owners certainly are small businesses, but
25 there are other small businesses that are

1 regulated by the Taxi and Limousine
2 Commission. Specifically, there are a lot of
3 businesses, such as license -- taxicab
4 licensing agents, taxicab brokers, beater
5 shops, owners of multiple medallions, all of
6 whom are also small businesses. If you look
7 at the definition of a small business --

8 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

9 MR. MAZER: -- set forth by the Small
10 Business Administration, you look at whether
11 or not you control market share, and you look
12 at whether or not the revenue is such that
13 you qualify as a non-small or larger
14 business. And these entitles are also small
15 businesses, and relief needs to be -- and the
16 rules need to be looked at for each of these
17 other small businesses, to make sure that we
18 are complying with the executive order.

19 Finally, I'd like to address --
20 (Speaker timer alarm).

21 MR. MAZER: Yes, thanks.

22 Two points, one is that the executive
23 order requires that we create a non -- not an
24 undue hardship to honor small businesses, and
25 we'd like to see the TLC and the industry

1 work collaboratively, not in an adversarial
2 approach. And finally, with respect to the
3 Medallion Relief Program, we'd like TLC to
4 consider expanding the Medallion Relief
5 Program to owners of medallion of more than
6 six medallions, because these are people who
7 also have substantial loans and could benefit
8 from loan relief. We also submitted written
9 comments. We would like you to consider
10 those as well, and I'd be happy to answer any
11 questions you may have.

12 CHAIR VALDIVIA: I would like to ask a
13 question about -- so, do you think it should
14 be expanded beyond the six?

15 MR. MAZER: Correct.

16 CHAIR VALDIVIA: I don't know enough of
17 the history about the six.

18 What would your organization want it
19 expanded to?

20 MR. MAZER: Okay. Originally, it was
21 five when the Medallion Relief Program
22 started, and then it was expanded to six. I
23 think that was done so that you could have
24 maybe three mini fleet corporations, and you
25 would be able to participate. Debt is debt.

1 If I own six medallions and I had a debt of
2 \$500,000 on each, that's \$3 million in debt,
3 and I have medallion -- and I could benefit
4 from MRP. Id I own ten medallions and I had
5 \$500,000 debt on each, I'd have \$5 million in
6 debt, and I would not be able to participate.

7 Now, I'd like to see it open to every
8 medallion owner. I don't know if that's
9 reasonable. Obviously, somebody owns -- if
10 we have a fleet that may have a thousand
11 medallions, I'm not saying that they should
12 have Medallion Relief Program. But we don't
13 want medallions to be foreclosed on, and we
14 don't want this -- I don't think we
15 benefit -- and I put this in my written
16 comments. I don't think the industry
17 benefits by having a few big players own a
18 lot of medallions through foreclosure, and
19 that's what's happening now.

20 We have banks that are foreclosing on
21 medallions, and they're warehousing them,
22 they're putting them -- they're holding on to
23 them, some of the times they put them in
24 storage, sometimes they lease them out. And
25 is that healthy for the industry? This

1 should be an industry based on small
2 businesses, not an industry with a couple of
3 large players dominating. Obviously, when I
4 talk about small -- I'm not saying that a TNC
5 is a small business. Don't get me wrong, I'm
6 not saying that every business regulated by
7 the TLC is a small business. What I'm
8 saying, though, is that we have to look at
9 all of the entities. And I think we look --
10 it's easy enough.

11 I mean, the Small Business
12 Administration looks at owners of businesses
13 and decides whether they qualify as a small
14 business or not. Back in the early 70s, the
15 Small Business Administration actually did a
16 study on the medallion industry and looked at
17 multiple ownership of medallions as small
18 businesses, and whether or not they could
19 qualify for Small Business Administration
20 loans and things of that nature. I think
21 everybody is hurting at this point.

22 You know, like I said, the rules that
23 are before us, I said at the beginning, I
24 would like to see a lot more relief even for
25 drivers, and a lot of things that I would be

1 happy to touch on, and I think you heard some
2 of them today that are concerns for drivers.
3 All I'm saying is we have to look globally at
4 everybody, every entity, whether it's
5 small --

6 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

7 MR. MAZER: And I think we covered it.
8 Thank you.

9 (Applause).

10 MODERATOR: Zubin Soleimany.

11 MR. SOLEIMANY: Hello, good morning,
12 Commissioner Valdivia, Commissioners. My
13 name is Zubin Soleimany. I'm a staff
14 attorney at the New York Taxi Workers
15 Alliance. My colleagues have already
16 testified about the MRP proposal, and it's
17 included in our written comments, so I'm
18 going to focus my comments on the penalty
19 reductions.

20 So, the Taxi Workers Alliance supports
21 the proposed rules of eliminating these fines
22 regarding suspensions, and we appreciate the
23 TLC is recognizing the principle that these
24 penalties are duplicative. We think this is
25 a good start, but just a start. Frankly,

1 we're a little disappointed, I think in how
2 limited this proposal is. Executive Order 11
3 calls for a comprehensive review of the TLC's
4 rule books or the agency's rule books, with
5 regard to burdensome fines, and this is far
6 from -- far from comprehensive.

7 I think what TLC needs to do as part of
8 this comprehensive review, I think overall
9 the broader picture, a couple big ticket
10 items is looking at whether fines are
11 commensurate with the workforce earnings.
12 Right now, the average hourly pay, according
13 to State of New York, for a private sector
14 work in New York City is \$42 an hour, right.
15 Under -- take the high-volume driver pay
16 rules, it's -- take-home pay is set around
17 \$21.72 an hour, so you're looking at less
18 than half of the average worker pay.

19 But then, take a parking ticket, which
20 if I get a parking ticket, you get a parking
21 ticket, it's \$65. For a driver, it's \$200,
22 more than three times the penalty for a
23 worker that makes half of the average
24 New York City workers pay is ridiculous.
25 That would be an easy thing for the TLC to go

1 and adjust those amounts. That sort of
2 adjustment should happen across the board. I
3 think the principle recognized in these
4 rules, that it's unfair and burdensome to
5 impose a suspension and a monetary fine needs
6 to be applied across the rule book, absent
7 illegal operations, cases of egregious
8 misconduct, or penalties for pending
9 compliance, there is no need. There is no
10 need for a fine and a suspension to be
11 imposed at the same time.

12 This is especially the case, and I
13 would urge the TLC to revisit the broad
14 practice of range penalties, where two
15 drivers charged and convicted of the same
16 violation, one could -- there's a range of,
17 take acts against the public interest, you
18 could get \$150 fine, the minimum, or you
19 could get \$350 and a 30-day suspension.
20 You're making \$1,500 a week, you're out for
21 30 days, you're losing \$6,000. There is no
22 control on whether a hearing officer --

23 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

24 MR. SOLEIMANY: -- imposes \$150 or
25 imposes \$350 and 30-day suspension. The OATH

1 case law says they don't have to explain it.
2 That is unprecedented. There's a 42 times
3 difference between 66.50 and 1.50. That kind
4 of control -- Executive Order 11, I think,
5 would require us to look at that issue and
6 rain those in. Either eliminate that broad
7 range, or require hearing officers to provide
8 some sort of rationale, like federal judges
9 or state judges do in their sentencing
10 guidelines.

11 (Speaker timer alarm).

12 MR. SOLEIMANY: Thank you. I'll just
13 briefly say one thing that I want to address,
14 and then I'll wrap it up, and the rest is in
15 our written comments, is the double
16 summonsing and the unfair treatment of
17 lessees and renter drivers under the red
18 light summonses. If I own my car and I get
19 it in my name, I get my TLC ticket dismissed
20 if I show the DOF violation. If I lease a
21 car, I don't, and I face three points and a
22 \$400 fine.

23 Now, your prosecutors will probably
24 say, "Well, this is what the ad code
25 requires," and this is -- and OATH has agreed

1 with them so far. OATH is wrong. They're
2 misreading the statute. The ad code says,
3 when there's a substantively identical
4 violation. So, the language of the statute
5 focuses on the substance of the incident.
6 It's the same picture in both summonses.
7 It's the same driver. It's the same
8 incident. That is the substantive identity.
9 The statute is not meant to extort drivers
10 for \$400 based on the technicality that the
11 car is held in an LLC. That was not the
12 intent. It's not in the legislative record.
13 It's not in the plain text of the statute.

14 TLC is firmly within its powers under
15 191004 to promulgate a rule that clarifies
16 that, and does not give preferential
17 treatment to owners in red light summonses.

18 Thank you for the extra time --

19 CHAIR VALDIVIA: May I ask a question,
20 Zubin?

21 MR. SOLEIMANY: Yes, please.

22 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

23 So, on red light camera, what is your
24 recommendation, potentially?

25 MR. SOLEIMANY: So, the recommend --

1 so, thank you. The recommendation would be
2 that any driver who shows proof of payment of
3 a substantively identical summons should be
4 able to have the ticket dismissed. So, if
5 I'm the vehicle owner, and I said, "Look, I
6 already paid the \$50 DOF fine," TLC will
7 dismiss it. The same should be extended to
8 any driver who could show -- and, you know,
9 TLC records know who the driver is of any
10 vehicle at the time. They could say, "Okay.
11 I paid this as well."

12 And the proof of payment, I think
13 TLC -- what's important here is that TLC
14 already contemplates that records be kept
15 around proof of payment for these summonses,
16 right. There are three provisions in
17 Chapters 58 and 59 that say owners can charge
18 drivers for these tickets. And then, when
19 you end your lease with a vehicle owner, they
20 say, "Oh, you get your deposit back, absent
21 any red light summons." So, that implies
22 that the companies are keeping records in
23 compliance of that. So, these records should
24 exist, if the driver shows proof of that, and
25 it's connected to TLC records showing them

1 driving their vehicle at that time, the
2 summons should likewise be dismissed.

3 CHAIR VALDIVIA: And what is your
4 understanding of what happens today for a
5 driver who rents?

6 MR. SOLEIMANY: A driver who rents
7 faces a -- they face prosecution by TLC, and
8 they either have to go to a hearing, or the
9 settlement that they're offered still puts
10 three points on their license. Where the
11 driver who owns their car gets to avoid the
12 points altogether.

13 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

14 MR. SOLEIMANY: All right. Thank you.
15 (Applause).

16 MODERATOR: Dinara Zhanpeissova.

17 MS. ZHANPEISSOVA: Hi. My name is
18 Dinara. I represent the Eastern Europe and
19 Central Asian drivers. I've been driving for
20 nine years now.

21 So, first, I want to say we support the
22 proposed driver relief penalty reduction
23 changes. Thank you so much. Eliminating
24 unnecessary fines and fees is an important
25 step, but reducing a penalty is only part of

1 the solution. We also need to look why
2 drivers are receiving these penalties in the
3 first place. A very, very good example is
4 missed TLC inspections. We support
5 eliminating the monetary, but TLC also needs
6 to improve the inspection system itself.
7 Drivers often have difficulty getting
8 appointments. There may be limited
9 availability, limited choices, dates, or
10 times.

11 If a driver is required to complete an
12 inspection by deadline, TLC needs to make
13 sure the driver actually has a reasonable
14 opportunity to get an appointment before the
15 deadline. Please improve the scheduling
16 system. Provide more appointment
17 availability and flexibility. Make
18 rescheduling easier, and protect drivers when
19 the reasonable appointment was available.
20 Don't just remove the fine. Fix the system
21 that creates the problem.

22 We also ask TLC to consider several
23 additional issues. For missing TLC diamond
24 decals, especially first offense, right now
25 is \$500 fine. You guys have to give --

1 drivers should receive first warning, and
2 then give an opportunity to correct the
3 problem before receiving a fine. For license
4 plate frames, if the plate number is
5 completely visible and only small TLC
6 lettering is partially covered, drivers
7 believe that receiving a large fine and
8 points is inappropriate. We're also
9 concerned about being punished twice for the
10 same incident. If a driver already received
11 a red light or speed camera penalty from DMV,
12 we ask TLC to reconsider adding another TLC
13 penalty and points to the same incident.

14 And finally, we need more fairness in
15 the compliance system. Drivers have reported
16 receiving a violation or settlement offers
17 from complaints, such as blocking a bike lane
18 without being provided photographs or video.
19 We have also heard about multiple complaints
20 producing multiple penalties for what appears
21 to be exact same incident. Drivers should
22 have the right to see the evidence against
23 them. And one incident should not become
24 multiple punishment, simply because multiple
25 people submitted complaints at the same time.

1 We're not asking TLC to remove
2 accountability. We're asking for system that
3 is fair, proportional, transparent, and
4 actually gives drivers a reasonable
5 opportunity to follow the rules.

6 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

7 MS. ZHANPEISSOVA: Thank you for
8 listening us, and for giving drivers
9 opportunity to be heard. Thank you so much.

10 (Applause).

11 MODERATOR: Doryan Valencia.

12 MR. VALENCIA: Hi, how are you? Sorry,
13 I no speak English. I speak Spanish.

14 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Okay.

15 MR. VALENCIA: (Speaking in Spanish
16 dialect).

17 (Applause).

18 MODERATOR: Arjun Lal.

19 MR. LAL: Good morning. My name is
20 Arjun Lal. I represent the Nomad drivers of
21 Eastern Europe and Central Asia. I'd like to
22 bring to attention another issue that many
23 TLC drivers face in real world. Drivers
24 sometimes need temporary access to another
25 TLC vehicle or arrangements to continue

1 working. Informal agreements involving TLC
2 plates and vehicles already happen between
3 people in the industry. The problem is that
4 when something goes wrong, there's often no
5 clear TLC approved agreement defining who was
6 actually operating and responsible for the
7 vehicle at that time.

8 For example, if a vehicle or plate
9 owner allows another properly licensed and
10 registered TLC driver to operate under an
11 approved arrangement, and that driver
12 receives a camera ticket for red light
13 camera, speed camera, the bus lane camera, or
14 the new AI flock cameras, toll violations,
15 parking tickets, or other fines, those
16 consequences can sometimes follow the
17 registered owner. This creates conflict
18 between drivers and can leave the owner
19 responsible for something they did not
20 personally do, because the driver is the one
21 -- the owner is the one who's responsible for
22 the tickets.

23 Instead of allowing those arrangements
24 to remain informal, I ask the TLC to consider
25 creating a legal and transparent rental or

1 temporary use system. TLC could create a
2 standard agreement that identifies the owner,
3 the authorized TLC driver, and the vehicle
4 and plates, and the exact beginning and
5 ending dates of the arrangement. It could be
6 registered electronically with the TLC, so
7 there's a clear record of who had possession
8 and responsibility for the vehicle at the
9 time.

10 When legally possible, violations
11 associated with the conduct of the authorized
12 driver during the period should follow that
13 driver rather than automatically becoming the
14 owner's responsibility. When legal -- the
15 TLC can also establish requirements for
16 insurance, driver licensing, vehicle
17 eligibility, and dispute resolution, so that
18 both sides are fairly protected. The reality
19 is that informal agreements already exist.
20 Creating a regulated system would bring them
21 into the open, establish accountability, and
22 give TLC a much better information about
23 who's actually operating the vehicle.

24 Drivers need practical rules that
25 reflect how this industry actually works. I

1 ask the TLC to please study this issue,
2 create a safe, legal, and fair document
3 system that protects both drivers and vehicle
4 owners. Thank you.

5 (Applause).

6 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

7 MODERATOR: Saif Aizah.

8 MR. AIZAH: Good morning, Commissioner.
9 Good morning to all the commissioners. My
10 name is Saif Aizah. I am a member of the
11 New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

12 In today's financial crisis, as a
13 driver, it is very hard to just make ends
14 meet. I do support the TLC proposal for
15 removing fines that adds up to the financial
16 stress as a driver, especially for a driver
17 like me. I only drive for Lyft. I was
18 unfairly deactivated by Uber. These fines
19 only make earning a living very challenging
20 and hard for us. Every driver have a family
21 to support. Fines like missed drug test or
22 missed inspection and lost licenses, these
23 fines only hurt us as drivers where we have
24 to work longer hours just to pay these fines
25 that was not necessary in the first place.

1 Also, as a member of New York Taxi
2 Workers Alliance, we are demanding that TLC
3 to eliminate monetary fines for all
4 violations that already carry a suspension or
5 revocation, and eliminate the increased
6 penalties and points for parking in
7 nonhazardous violations that the TLC adopted
8 last year. Reset all the fines, so they are
9 proportionate to drivers' earnings. We are
10 very struggling just to make ends meet. And
11 every story that you heard today was all
12 about how we, as drivers, are struggling.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause).

15 MODERATOR: Vinod Malhotra.

16 MR. MALHOTRA: Good morning,
17 Commissioner. Everyone, good afternoon. My
18 name Vinod Malhotra. So, I am driving -- I
19 am member of New York Taxi since my 30 years.
20 I drive 33 years. I love union, helping
21 drivers so much. Nobody ever going to help
22 like NYTWA, Taxi Alliance. So, thank you for
23 so much.

24 I have my owner medallion as
25 individual. It's on my own name. So, it

1 make big problem with on my name. I
2 cannot -- I have -- I cannot transfer my
3 medallion. I have paid extra tax on the
4 medallion, sixteen cents, which is called
5 self-employment tax. So, thank you for your
6 interest in changing these new rules. So,
7 please allow us to -- we can transfer our
8 medallion to the S corporation or like LLC,
9 so we can have little take off this burden,
10 tax burden, and it make easy loan transfers
11 with the city-backed guarantee, so there more
12 people they can buy -- they have chance to
13 buy these medallions.

14 I already know my few friends, they
15 already buy the medallion in oral, right.
16 Suppose I own the medallion, I cannot drive.
17 My other friends, they own the medallion, but
18 in only oral, right, not in like a system by
19 the legal way, so this way can help a lot of
20 the drivers. And some drivers, they're
21 waiting for this rule, change of rule, so
22 thank you. That's great help for us.

23 So, other things, so the reducing the
24 fine, it's very good step towards us. It can
25 help us, but it's not big help. This

1 happened like while in the six months of
2 while time, right? So, you need provide like
3 other steps how can boost our incomes, you
4 know, like every day incomes. Our income is
5 going very low, so like there's companies,
6 app companies, they're cheating all drivers,
7 no matter Uber drivers, Lyft drivers, yellow
8 cabs, they're cheating on the fares. They
9 send us different offer. They pay us
10 different money, right?

11 So, another thing: So, there's no
12 need -- a few days ago, like cap on the FHV
13 cabs, right, FHV vehicles. I don't believe
14 that cap is fully implemented. Still, TLC
15 giving the license plate to the wheelchair
16 vehicles. That's not the worth, you know.
17 Every driver is crying these days. They're
18 not making money, right? So, most times you
19 see taxi apps, they say -- oh, business is
20 dead --

21 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

22 MR. MALHOTRA: -- the city is dead.
23 The airport is dead. We have to make money,
24 right? You need to find some source of where
25 we can make money.

1 So, another thing there lease, lease
2 for single driver to drive in 24 hours,
3 that's a very high lease, they're paying like
4 \$1,100. It's very hard to make to pay off
5 that lease, so bring down that lease. So,
6 thank you so much. Thank you for testimony.
7 Thank you.

8 (Applause).

9 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

10 MODERATOR: Norman Buenaventura.

11 MR. BUENAVENTURA: Good morning,
12 everyone, and to all the respected panels,
13 thank you for having us here. And I did not
14 prepare anything, like, in front of me to say
15 to you guys, because I'm going to speak to
16 you guys from the bottom of my heart, and to
17 everyone in the room.

18 First, let me get this out of the way
19 about the MRP program. If you could please
20 allow us to make that transfer to whoever it
21 may be, it will definitely help us, not only
22 me, but the other drivers as well. If
23 something happens to me tomorrow, God forbid,
24 my wife who works for the post office for the
25 last 28 years, she's not going to drive my

1 taxi. She's not going to drive the yellow
2 taxi. My kids are only 18 the 16. My plan
3 for them is to send them to college, so at
4 least they would get a fair share of life.

5 Bottom line is whatever I say here is
6 not really going to matter, because what we
7 need is a business out there. We're not
8 looking to be millionaires. We just want to
9 pay our bills every month. My bills at some
10 point, was like at one point, around \$4,000,
11 \$6,000. But now, I'm looking at between
12 \$7,000 to \$9,000 a month. I go out there
13 seven days a week. If I make a hundred
14 dollars a day, including everything, I'm
15 taking home nothing. I can make like \$3,000
16 a month. Where am I going to get the rest of
17 the money to pay for my bills?

18 So, with that in say, all we're asking
19 for you is, we know where you guys need to
20 look. You know what to do. Just like when I
21 pray to God. I don't have to ask God for
22 anything. I just say, "Thank you," just like
23 what I'm asking you guys now. All I need is
24 like for you to not to drop the ball on us,
25 okay? My wife, for the last three years, we

1 were struggling. I came to NYLAG at one
2 point, I thought they just going to help me
3 with the medallion program, but then they
4 also found out that I cannot pay my mortgage
5 anymore. They helped me with that, and I
6 appreciate them a lot for that.

7 At one point again, I was this close,
8 this close, to joining my good friend,
9 brother of Richard Chow, Kenny Chow.

10 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

11 MR. BUENAVENTURA: I was already
12 thinking of committing suicide. But then,
13 again, my kids don't deserve that. My family
14 don't deserve that. Any of these people in
15 this room don't deserve that. I know all of
16 these guys are struggling. So, again, what
17 we're asking here is give us a business out
18 there. Find something, find a way for us to
19 make that business, so we can pay our bills.
20 So, we can have some --

21 (Speaker timer alarm).

22 MR. BUENAVENTURA: -- something to eat,
23 something to send our kids to college.
24 That's all we want. That's all we're asking.
25 I can tell you all the flaws, all the wrongs,

1 point here, point there, that's not going to
2 make any difference. What we need is
3 solutions. And what that solution is, I
4 don't know. I haven't had the answer.
5 That's why I'm here. This is the first time
6 I've attended this hearing. I've been
7 driving for the last 15 years. Very first
8 time I came down here, because I know the
9 past administration, they don't care about
10 us. But now I'm here because I know you guys
11 care. This administration care. That's why
12 I'm here. And now I'm speaking in front of
13 you. So, please, we're not asking for a lot.
14 We're just asking to have some business out
15 there, so we can pay our bills.

16 Thank you.

17 (Applause).

18 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you. If I may
19 ask a question. Thank you so much, sir.
20 Thank you, Norman. I really appreciate you
21 being here, and thank you for your powerful
22 testimony. I just wanted to make sure I
23 understood.

24 So, from the MRP rule-making
25 standpoint, you're saying you would like the

1 ability to transfer to an LLC or an S corp?

2 MR. BUENAVENTURA: Yes.

3 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Beyond family, right?

4 MR. BUENAVENTURA: Yes.

5 CHAIR VALDIVIA: So, I just wanted to
6 confirm.

7 MR. BUENAVENTURA: Correct.

8 CHAIR VALDIVIA: So, thank you so much,
9 and thank you for taking a chance on us,
10 okay?

11 MR. BUENAVENTURA: Thank you. Thank
12 you.

13 (Applause).

14 MODERATOR: Larbi Aitaabou.

15 MR. AITAABOU: Good morning,
16 Commissioner.

17 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Well, good morning.

18 MR. AITAABOU: My name is Larbi, and
19 I'm here on behalf of thousands of drivers in
20 New York City. I've been in the industry
21 myself, and 2016 I decided to organize,
22 because I see people from my community don't
23 understand anything about what the Commission
24 is doing, what the TLC rules are, and that
25 was my mission, to actually represent them,

1 be their advocates. And since then, it's
2 been my job 24 hours, like Michele earlier,
3 we don't sleep. Because why? Because
4 there's mountains of issues that drivers are
5 facing every single day.

6 And I know a lot of my colleagues here
7 at the organization express a lot of issues
8 today, and I just want to express one. You
9 guys are the legislative body that create
10 these rules, these conditions. Do you guys
11 pay attention to the life of these drivers?
12 Have you ever knocked on somebody's door and
13 ask if they need help, assistance? What is
14 the asset in this industry? The assets are
15 not the company or the passengers. The
16 assets are the drivers that they are here in
17 this room. I was one of them. I'm still one
18 of them. We are the asset. You need to take
19 care of us.

20 I have couple of my fellow drivers
21 here --

22 (Applause).

23 MR. AITAABOU: Thank you -- that lost
24 their license because E-ZPass registration
25 expired. They were not in the country. They

1 completely lost their livelihood because TLC
2 could not help. Because if DMV suspend your
3 license due to other issues that you may
4 have, TLC doesn't give you any pathway to get
5 it back, and it's done. I understand the cap
6 happened for a reason, but again, these
7 people been in the industry for ten, 20,
8 30 years. I, myself, started with yellow cab
9 in 2007, switched to block car in 2009,
10 opened my own company in 2012, and I had
11 drivers from my community that lost their
12 livelihood. They moved to other states when
13 the app companies started with the promise of
14 making whatever. That's not the reality we
15 expected. Different.

16 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

17 MR. AITAABOU: Thank you.

18 Speaking about the fine, I thank you,
19 Commissioner, for bringing us and hearing us
20 and understanding our lives. I recently met
21 you at the brother who -- Tibetan. I don't
22 have to get to that. And brother Norman just
23 expressed that he was about to take his life.
24 Why? Is it worth it? Why do I need to take
25 my life? For what? No, come and fight.

1 Don't take your life.

2 And please, everyone here, let's work
3 together with these beautiful commissioners
4 right here, right? And our new commissioner,
5 we thank you for opening the space for us to
6 speak today. And I hope that this fine, you
7 know, will be fair to everyone. I'm not
8 saying eliminate all the fines. Yes, some
9 drivers deserve fine, and I recognize it.
10 Sometimes I deserve a fine. But there are
11 certain fines that are unnecessary, really
12 just a burden on drivers.

13 And I thank you for your time.

14 (Applause).

15 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you.

16 MODERATOR: Our final speaker is
17 Rafeline Fanini Diaz.

18 MR. DIAZ: Good morning. Good
19 afternoon, everybody. My name is Rafeline
20 Fanini. I was a driver to 2016, and then I
21 got retired for medical condition, so I put
22 my plates on storage and DMV, and when I
23 tried to get back, I couldn't get it, so
24 that's one of my concern. But in general,
25 Mr. Mohamed and a lot of others, they face --

1 I mean tell all the issues the drivers in the
2 City is having. So, technically, all the
3 drivers have been treated like a bees working
4 for a hive. Every single institution or
5 company that come to the city to do business
6 with the driver get billionaire, and the only
7 that they get is that they have to work a
8 little bit more to make the part.

9 So, I would like you to do a general
10 review of all the drivers' concern because
11 it's sad. I came back and the business is
12 worse. And on top of that, they get treated
13 by passenger and a lot of people like
14 nobodies. You disrespect a flight attendant
15 in any airline and you face consequence.
16 These people, they get even killed because
17 they're treated like nobody. I would like
18 you to see what you can do about it.

19 And thank you for listening to me.
20 Thank you for making this possible. God
21 bless all.

22 (Applause).

23 MODERATOR: We have one more speaker,
24 Pedro Acosta.

25 MR. ACOSTA: Good morning, everybody.

1 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Good morning.

2 MR. ACOSTA: Good morning,
3 Commissioner. Thank you for giving us this
4 beautiful opportunity to talk and say some of
5 the problem that we all have here, because
6 it's a lot. It's going to take a few months
7 to hear everything that's going on with us.

8 First, I want to thank you so much
9 because you're taking the approach to dismiss
10 some of the summons that we are facing for
11 several years, and that is very important.
12 We have to continue listening to some more.
13 Based on some that is affecting a lot of
14 drivers. It costs a thousand dollars. When
15 a driver goes on vacation, especially for my
16 brother from Africa, the Middle East, they go
17 for two months on vacation. When they come
18 back, they're vehicle is not operating for
19 60 days, they find a summons, and it's a
20 thousand dollars. That's not fair at all.

21 CHAIR VALDIVIA: You said it's a
22 thousand dollars?

23 MR. ACOSTA: A thousand dollars. I
24 have a few cases like this. Also, like some
25 of my coworkers talked before, if you want to

1 really give us dignity as drivers, you have
2 to pay attention very much to the medical
3 trips. There are more than 28,000 medical
4 trips here in the New York City every day.
5 Most of them are people with disabilities. A
6 lot of them, people in wheelchair. We have
7 around 99,000 people who uses wheelchair in
8 New York here. So, it's a lot of trips that
9 we have, and those people need so much time
10 to come out to the vehicle. So, they don't
11 need like five minutes. In five minutes, we
12 get a ticket every now and then.

13 Not only that, but those companies,
14 they're about six brokers that I know here in
15 New York that they keep, I think, like
16 50 percent of the money. And the money they
17 give to the base is probably 50 percent. And
18 then, the base take another fee. When it
19 gets to the driver, the driver just get a few
20 dollars. So, this is -- most of the trips
21 here, I think, come from medical trips, and
22 most of the drivers are doing this job. So,
23 this, if you really want dignity for us, you
24 have to pay attention to this very much. So,
25 one more thing. Hold on, please. Also, I

1 don't have to speak about the inflation,
2 because they already talk about that. But
3 there is a big issue that --

4 MODERATOR: Thirty seconds remaining.

5 MR. ACOSTA: -- some of our workers,
6 drivers are losing their plates. I have
7 here, for example, the gentleman who spoke
8 before, Doryan, he lost his plate, I mean,
9 he's about to lose it. It's in storage right
10 now, because he couldn't renew his insurance,
11 okay? He had a pedestrian accident, which is
12 not his fault, but there are many things
13 going on here in New York. There are many
14 people looking for easy money, and they're
15 creating fake accident.

16 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Fake what?

17 MR. ACOSTA: Fake accident.

18 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Accident, okay.

19 MR. ACOSTA: And he's one of these
20 victim. He lost his plate. It's in storage,
21 but he's about to lose it. My coworker here,
22 also, Marisol Tejera, she's about -- she lost
23 her plate about three years ago because of
24 E-ZPass problem. E-ZPass is a big issue,
25 okay, and that happens because we're not able

1 to transfer plate. We're not able to sell
2 our plate, to transfer it to somebody else.
3 She has some -- for example, if I rent my
4 vehicle to yourself and you take E-ZPass
5 violation, it comes to me. Then, if I don't
6 pay that money, I lose my plate, and that's
7 what's happening to her. That's not fair.
8 We have to pay attention to this if we really
9 want dignity for drivers, okay?

10 One more thing is, there are also some
11 issues going on with the processing in TLC
12 when you have to do a new plate. Processing
13 a plate --

14 CHAIR VALDIVIA: A new FHV license
15 plate?

16 MR. ACOSTA: Yeah. For example, a WAV
17 vehicle that you get a new plate, there's
18 some issues going on there. I can't explain
19 here because it takes time, but I would like
20 you -- I'd like to ask you to have more
21 conversations with us, so we can give you
22 details about all the things going on.

23 Waymo is another big problem that is
24 coming up, okay? I have been -- the TLC very
25 shy in terms of Waymo. I haven't seen a

1 position from you guys. I know that you just
2 came a few days ago, which I don't blame you,
3 but before I haven't seen talking about this,
4 and we also have to address this problem.

5 Unlicensed vehicle on the street.

6 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Unlicensed, yeah.

7 MR. ACOSTA: That's a big, big, big
8 problem. That is a lot and it's keeping us
9 from getting work. We were paying so many
10 fees here. I've been kicked out by those
11 drivers all over Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx,
12 unlicensed vehicles, so we also need to
13 approach this problem, okay?

14 And also, I'd like to ask you that when
15 somebody get a ticket, you send by e-mail.
16 You send it only, right now, by mail. And if
17 we move, for some reason we don't get it, we
18 get suspended because we don't know that we
19 have a ticket. You force us to have a valid
20 e-mail. However, you don't use it to send us
21 the notification about the violation, only
22 physical letter. If we lose it, we don't
23 know what's going on.

24 A lot of drivers, they don't even know
25 how to go to the website, and they don't know

1 what's going on. So, please -- and there are
2 a lot of things that we have to talk, but I
3 know my time is over, and I really want to
4 appreciate everybody for listening my
5 testimony. Thank you so much.

6 (Applause).

7 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you so much,
8 sir, thank you. I have just one comment or
9 question. So, if anybody has specific
10 concerns today, we do have an intake table.
11 And, yes, and I will invite my deputy
12 commissioner of licensing to discuss with
13 you, if you would like to stay. But we do
14 have an intake table where you can highlight
15 specific issues. We can take down license
16 plate numbers, or we can take down your
17 license number and run it down and follow up
18 with you all, okay?

19 MR. ACOSTA: I'm more than glad to
20 participate in this meeting. Thank you.

21 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Yeah, thank you.

22 (Applause).

23 MR. HARTWELL: Thank you. This
24 concludes our public hearing.

25 Commissioner, I hand it back to you to

1 close out our hearing.

2 CHAIR VALDIVIA: Thank you to everyone
3 for your comments. I like to take
4 opportunities at hearings to learn and to
5 listen. That's really important to me. One
6 of the first things we did was to institute a
7 driver survey, where we got 4,000
8 respondents. 4,000 of you took time out of
9 your busy schedules to write to us. The
10 hearing process is also another way we
11 understand more what's on the ground. And
12 every regulatory agency needs to do more of
13 this work, where we really listen to the
14 people who are impacted in this market.

15 I just want to reiterate something that
16 I said upon the night of my nomination in
17 January, and I did start this job only a few
18 months ago. I had to get confirmed by City
19 Council. What I believe, and maybe it's
20 because I've been in transportation for close
21 to 20 years, is that when we actually support
22 the people who power our system, the entire
23 transportation service gets better. And so,
24 I appreciate you continuing to hold us
25 accountable. That's going to be really

1 important to us.

2 And I really am proud of the incredible
3 staff that I have at TLC who are able to put
4 on these events. We want to do more
5 in-person hearings, but we also want to
6 provide other options for you to be able to
7 call in and whatnot. But it is important for
8 our staff to meet you in person. It's
9 important for my commissioners and our fellow
10 commissioners to hear directly from you. So,
11 thank you for your stories. Thank you for
12 taking a chance on us, and I look forward to
13 more to come, so thank you.

14 (Applause).

15 (TIME NOTED: 11:52 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)

:SS

COUNTY OF QUEENS)

I, SABRINA BROWN STEWART, a Notary Public
within and for the State of New York, do hereby
certify:

That the witness whose examination is
hereinbefore set forth was duly sworn and that such
an examination is a true record of the testimony
given by such a witness.

I further certify that I am not related to
any of these parties to this action by blood or
marriage, and that I am not in any way interested in
the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
hand on this 21st day of August, 2026.

Sabrina Brown-Stewart
Sabrina Brown Stewart

**In Re Commission Public Hearing NYC - Taxi & Limousine
Commission**

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