

**Testimony of Taxi & Limousine Commission  
Commissioner/Chair, Matthew W. Daus**

**Before the City Council Transportation Committee  
March 12, 2009, 10 AM**

**Preliminary Budget Hearing**

Good morning, Chairman Liu and members of the City Council Transportation Committee. My name is Matthew Daus, and I am the Commissioner/Chair of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present testimony regarding the Fiscal Year 2010 Preliminary Budget for the TLC. Joining me today is Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration Louis Tazzi.

The TLC's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2010 is estimated at \$28,790,802. Of that amount, \$22,634,134 is for Personal Service (PS) and \$6,156,668 is for Other Than Personal Service or (OTPS), with a pending PS budget increase of \$487,787 from collective bargaining which would bring the total preliminary budget to \$29,278,589. Although our Fiscal 2008 and 2009 budgets did include a headcount reduction of 28, I want to assure the Council that while the reduction was significant, TLC has taken steps to ensure this reduction has not compromised the quality of services that we continue to provide to the riding public or to our licensees.

Currently TLC has 101,883 licensed drivers and 55,561 total licensed vehicles. With just over 47,021 current medallion driver licenses, which is a new record for TLC, 52,096 FHV driver licensees and 2,787 commuter van and paratransit driver licenses issued, the

industry continues to grow. The TLC has worked diligently to ensure that operational standards are not compromised as the number of license applications increase. In fact, while overall licensing activity is up almost 30% from two years ago, the wait time at the licensee facility was under 15 minutes in December. One reason for this success is the recent creation of a new Licensee Support/Customer Relations Unit which helps to provide “hands- on” assistance to our licensees while they navigate the licensing process. We employ a bilingual staff of greeters, informational kiosks, and new signage and forms written in “plain language” that are more user-friendly, all helping to facilitate communication between licensees and the TLC.

The TLC Adjudications Division has also actively employed new services and technology to enhance access to the adjudication process. In January, TLC commenced a new telephone consumer hearing process which has both increased demand as well as participation of the general public in TLC’s court process. The TLC is also implementing access to “Language Line” which will provide free language translation services to licensees during the hearing process. Finally, we are actively working on implementing videoconferencing between our Staten Island and Long Island City facilities as well as developing our Web conferencing capacity to increase participation in the adjudications process.

TLC’s current budget reflects several special projects and initiatives, including the “Rules Revision Project”, “Livery Reforms”, “Accessible Dispatch Project”, “Taxi Group Rides” and “Livery Stands”. Each of these programs requires close coordination between the TLC, the industry and interested stakeholders to ensure success. The “Rules Revision

Project,” which is in the second of its three phases, requires continuous outreach and work with our consultants to make our more than 3,000+ rules easier to understand in “plain language”, more concise and better organized.

As a regulatory agency, the TLC has an obligation to ensure that each passenger’s riding experience is safe, comfortable, reliable and convenient. The TLC’s Livery Reform Package will significantly update the way TLC regulates the industry and raise service standards by requiring the display of driver licenses, and the development of a point system to improve vehicle and base owner accountability. Included in this effort is a Livery Passenger Bill of Rights to help ensure passengers are receiving the highest standards of service. The TLC will conduct its own inspection of each licensed vehicle upon licensure and license renewal in addition to the 5 required DMV inspections during a vehicle’s license term.

TLC’s accessible dispatch demonstration project will continue into next year. This program utilizes a dispatcher to link the 238 accessible vehicles with identified riders that use a wheelchair. To date, this program has successfully provided more than 1,150 riders with wheelchair accessible service. The TLC and the Mayor’s Office of People with Disabilities are continuing a public outreach campaign to ensure NYC visitors and residents know about this service.

As mentioned in the Mayor’s recent State of the City Address, there is renewed interest in transportation initiatives that not only decrease the carbon footprint from vehicle emissions but also help to provide additional transportation services throughout the city,

where drivers can earn more money and passengers pay less per trip. The TLC, along with its partners at the Department of Transportation and the Economic Development Corporation, are currently exploring potential pilot programs that may utilize multi-fare meters, group rides and designated livery stands throughout the City. The TLC is aggressively working on developing plans for these projects and plans to present these ideas to its Board of Commissioners in the late spring.

To conclude, our testimony today highlights TLC's continuous commitment to better serve our licensees and the riding public through key operational improvements as well as exploring new and exciting methods to deliver TLC regulated transportation services. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I would now be happy to address any questions you may have.