



# NEW YORK CITY TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

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## TLC NEWS | TESTIMONY

### TESTIMONY OF TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMISSION SPECIFIC TO THE FISCAL 2005 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

*Delivered by TLC Commissioner/Chair Matthew W. Daus  
Thursday, May 18, 2004*

Good afternoon, Chairman Liu, Chairman Weprin, and members of the City Council Transportation and Finance Committees. My name is Matthew Daus, and I am the Commissioner/Chair of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our agency's new First Deputy Commissioner, Andrew Salkin who is coming over from the Department of Transportation. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present testimony specific to the Fiscal Year 2005 Executive Budget for the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

The TLC's operations will be conducted within a Budget for Fiscal Year 2005 of \$23,403,535. Of that amount, \$18,373,735 is for Personal Service (PS) and \$5,029,800 is for Other Than Personal Service (OTPS), which reflects a reduction of \$800,000 from the prior fiscal year. This Executive Budget provides for an authorized headcount of 420 full-time employees. These employees are responsible for licensing and regulating 12,487 taxicabs, including the 300 medallions recently sold at our 2004 Medallion Sale Auctions, nearly 41,000 for-hire vehicles, 373 commuter vans and 2,398 paratransit vehicles. In addition, the TLC licenses and regulates nearly 100,000 drivers and over 700 for-hire vehicle bases, in addition to paratransit bases, medallion brokers and agents, taximeter shops and commuter van authorities.

In addition to budgetary matters, today I will report on the agency's role in several significant citywide issues.

The TLC's medallion sale outreach plan, which included borough-wide outreach seminars, technical workshops, a broad advertising campaign including numerous print, TV and radio ads, and extensive flyer distribution, proved to be extremely successful, resulting in the acceptance of over six hundred and eighty bids. The TLC accepted bids on 174 mini-fleet medallions from April 12 through 15, 2004, with bids opened on April 16, 2004. Bids on 126 individual medallions were accepted from April 19 through 22, 2004, and opened on April 23, 2004.

With the auction process completed the TLC is confident that the addition of these vehicles will help the city meet the growing public desire for taxicab service. While numbers remain tentative until the agency has closed on all 300 medallions, Corporate medallions were sold at an average of \$344,423.00, while Individual Medallions were sold at an average of \$292,580.86. To date, 39 closings have been completed with 80 additional closings already scheduled to occur in the coming weeks. The rate of fare charged by New York City medallion taxicabs was increased by the Commission on March 30, 2004, with this rate taking effect on May 3rd. After extensive review and analysis of proposals, a fare increase of approximately 26% was approved. We believe this increase will successfully provide drivers with a livable wage (approximately \$12 per hour), something that was a priority for the TLC in deciding upon a suitable rate of fare. The minimum fare or "drop" increased from \$2 to \$2.50, and an additional increase from \$.30 to \$.40 per one-fifth mile; an increase from \$35 to \$45 for the JFK-Manhattan flat fare, and an increase in the Newark Airport surcharge from \$10 to \$15. The TLC also approved a \$1 surcharge for 4-8 p.m. on weekdays, except holidays and maintained the \$0.50 surcharge for evenings (8PM-6AM). Moreover, the TLC modified the maximum lease rates that may be charged drivers with respect to consideration of the proposed increase in taxicab rates of fare. The new lease rates went into effect May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the day of the fare increase.

The Commission also mandated service improvements for the medallion taxicab industry. These improvements will require each taxicab to accept credit and debit card payments, upgrading the standard for cleaner, scratch-resistant partitions, as well as electronic trip sheets. These service improvements are scheduled to go into effect after November 1, 2005. In addition, the TLC will be experimenting with additional discounted group ride stands.

In addition to the medallion sale and significant improvements on the horizon in the New York City taxicab industry, the TLC has also been busy improving service in the For-Hire-Vehicle Industry, especially with regard to providing wheelchair accessible service to people with disabilities.

In conjunction with the industry, the Department of Transportation ([DOT](#)), and Commissioner Matthew Sapolin of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities ([MOPD](#)), the TLC continues to work toward full implementation of FHV [Rule 6-07\(f\)](#), which requires that all for-hire vehicle bases provide wheelchair-accessible service upon request. The service must be equivalent in price and quality as would be provided to a non-wheelchair user.

In the past year TLC staff has called, visited and surveyed various FHV base stations throughout the City in an effort to educate them on how to comply with the accessible vehicle rule. Approval of the "A Ride for All, LLC" base station application in October 2003 was an extremely positive step toward implementation.

On January 2, 2004, in accordance with the knowledge that many bases would await a firm "deadline" by which to comply with the rule before doing so, the TLC issued [Industry Notice #04-01](#). This notice informed all FHV base owners that beginning on January 30, 2004, each would need to produce proof of compliance with Rule 6-07(f) upon TLC request. If unable to provide proof of compliance at that time, bases visited by the TLC would be issued 30-day Notices to Correct. Beginning Monday, February 2, 2004 a TLC Implementation Team began to visit FHV bases throughout the City, issuing Notices to Correct as appropriate. To date the TLC Implementation Team had visited 251 bases and issued 198 Notices to Correct.

As a result of this effort, to date there are over 225 FHV bases in compliance with Rule 6-07(f), all but three of which have contracted with other TLC-licensed bases for the provision of wheelchair-accessible service upon request. This represents over 30% of TLC's 706 currently licensed FHV bases. To date we are continuing to visit bases to ascertain whether they are in compliance, issuing a notice to correct in all instances where bases are deemed to be in non-compliance.

This is an important issue to the TLC, and I will continue to ensure that appropriate resources are dedicated to achieving industry compliance with the accessible vehicle rules.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I will now be happy to address any questions you may have.