

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 1
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

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February 26, 2024
Start: 1:06 p.m.
Recess: 1:16 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Selvena Brooks-Powers, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola
Chris Banks
Carmen N. De La Rosa
Amanda Farías
Farrah N. Louis
Mercedes Narcisse
Julie Won

A P P E A R A N C E S

Aziz Bah, Organizing Director for the
Independent Drivers Guild

Andrew Greenblatt, Policy Director for the
Independent Drivers Guild

Christopher Leon Johnson, self

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 check for the Committee on Transportation and
4 Infrastructure. Recorded on February 26, 2024, by
5 Nazly Paytuvi located in the 16th Floor.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon and
7 welcome to the New York City hearing on the Committee
8 on Transportation and Infrastructure.

9 Please silence all electronic devices.

10 At no time, please do not approach the
11 dais. If you have any questions, please raise your
12 hand and one of us, the Sergeants-at-Arms, will
13 kindly assist you.

14 Thank you for your kind cooperation.

15 Chair, we are ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [GAVEL] Good
17 afternoon and welcome to this hearing of the
18 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am
19 Selvena Brooks-Powers, Chair of the Committee.

20 Today, we will be hearing a Preconsidered
21 Introduction sponsored by Council Member Amanda
22 Farías, a local law in relation to the compensation
23 received by for-hire vehicle drivers for advertising
24 on the interior of for-hire vehicles. This bill would
25 amend Local Law 33 of 2024, which we passed last

2 session and would clarify that any driver of a for-
3 hire vehicle with an approved tablet in their vehicle
4 would receive a minimum of 25 percent of the gross
5 revenue generated by such a tablet. It also would set
6 the fee for the interior advertising company license
7 at 500 dollars.

8 We will come back to Council Member
9 Farías when she reaches to be able to speak on her
10 bill.

11 We have also already had conversations
12 with both the Taxi and Limousine Commission and the
13 Administration who have provided their comments and
14 feedback on this bill in lieu of testimony today so
15 we will move on to public testimony.

16 I will now turn to the Committee Counsel
17 to call the first panel for public testimony.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: We will now
19 move to public testimony.

20 For those wishing to testify and have not
21 yet registered, please see the Sergeants at the back
22 of the room to fill out a testimony slip.

23 For those online, if you have not
24 registered to testify, please register to testify at
25 the New York City Council website.

2 We'll move on with in-person testimony.

3 As I call your name, please come up to the table at
4 the side, and we'll begin testimony. I'll call Andrew
5 Greenblatt and Aziz Bah.

6 You can begin.

7 AZIZ BAH: Good morning, Chair Brooks-
8 Powers, Members of the Transportation Committee. My
9 name is Aziz Bah. I'm a for-hire vehicle driver and
10 the Organizing Director for the Independent Drivers
11 Guild. I'm joined here by Andrew Greenblatt who is
12 our Policy Director and by a few IDG drivers,
13 supporters, but unfortunately they are stuck trying
14 to clear the security to get here.

15 Thank you for this opportunity to testify
16 regarding the Intro. by Council Member Farías that
17 would amend Local Law 33 of 2024 with regard to the
18 compensation received by for-hire vehicle drivers for
19 advertising on the interior of the for-hire vehicles.
20 IDG has long advocated for the right of ride-share to
21 be permitted to place exterior and interior
22 advertising on and within their vehicles ever since
23 TLC's bizarre and unjust decision in August 2019 when
24 TLC took this revenue-enhancing ability away from our
25 best ride-share drivers, but at the same time, they

2 allowed medallion owners to continue receiving this
3 revenue.

4 We cannot thank Majority Leader Farías
5 enough for working with IDG on her original bill,
6 Intro. 1139-A, that restored the rideshare drivers'
7 ability to supplement their income from interior
8 advertising while providing some industry parity for
9 our hard-working rideshare drivers. This amendment
10 would simply address some remaining concerns that
11 were unable to be addressed before the end of the
12 2023 session. This Preconsidered bill would amend
13 Local Law 33 of 2024 to clarify that any driver of a
14 for-hire vehicle with an approved tablet in their
15 vehicles will receive a minimum of 25 percent of the
16 gross revenue generated by such tablets in their
17 vehicles. Inserting the word minimum before 25
18 percent established that drivers will have a regular
19 and predictable minimum share of the revenue while
20 providing the opportunity for the market to play a
21 role in any future increases. As such, it will allow
22 the interior advertising provider to compete for
23 drivers' services. Inserting the word gross before
24 revenue would ensure that drivers get a fair share of
25 the total revenue generated without any undue taxes,

2 fees, or expenses the driver should not be held
3 responsible for.

4 We would also encourage the Council to at
5 some point allow for rooftop advertising on rideshare
6 vehicles to have complete parity with medallion
7 owners and provide our drivers with much-needed
8 additional income this will also produce.

9 We thank Chair Brooks-Powers, Majority
10 Leader Fariás, and the Members of the Committee for
11 all your continued support for rideshare drivers.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so
14 much for that.

15 I'd like to recognize my Colleagues who
16 are present here today. Council Members Louis, De La
17 Rosa, Fariás, and Narcisse.

18 Now, we'll just pause with public
19 testimony to have remarks from Majority Leader Amanda
20 Fariás.

21 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: I can yield my
22 time. This is a much-needed and followup from what
23 we've heard on some of the small edits to make the
24 bill better. Proud to still be working with our
25 partners on the ground and our drivers every day and

2 looking forward to these amendments to ensure that
3 every effort that can be made to increasing the
4 revenues for drivers is there in this process. Thank
5 you, Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

7 ANDREW GREENBLATT: I'm just here to take
8 any questions. If you don't have any, I did want to
9 just take a moment to acknowledge the drivers who
10 have made it through security. If you just want to
11 raise your hands.

12 AZIZ BAH: Finally.

13 ANDREW GREENBLATT: We won't be repeating
14 the same testimony over and over to save your time,
15 but I did want you to know they are here in support
16 of the bill and thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
18 Thank you folks for being here today.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: We have one
20 more member of the public to testify.

21 If any other members of the public are
22 here and wish to testify, please see the Sergeant at
23 the table in the back.

24 Anyone appearing virtually, if you want
25 to testify, again, please indicate you wish to

2 testify on the Zoom or sign up through the Council
3 testimony website.

4 I'll now call Christopher Leon Johnson
5 up.

6 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hi. My name is
7 Christopher Leon Johnson. I came from the 14th Floor,
8 I didn't know you were on the 16th, but I'm here now.

9 An e-bike is a for-hire vehicle because a
10 motorized device attached to it and it makes the bike
11 go fast so it's a motorized vehicle. Now, I'm going
12 to say this right now and I don't want to piss people
13 off, but I have to because recently a fellow
14 journalist of mine passed away in an e-bike fire. His
15 name was Fazil Khan, and what's going is we need to
16 get this bill, the Intro. bill with Bob Holden, to
17 the City Council. We need a hearing. Chair Powers, we
18 need a hearing for Bob Holden's bill because a fellow
19 journalist just passed away, and the City sadly makes
20 a lot of articles about this stuff in a good light,
21 and a big problem we have here is we have a City
22 Council Committee, and I'm not taking all you guys
23 because none of you guys here really care, but you
24 guys are kept to the Transportation Alternatives and
25 Open Plans and Streetsblog, and this is the reason

2 why that that man's passed away because organizations
3 like Transportation Alternatives and Streetsblog and
4 Open Plans allow this to happen because all they care
5 about is keeping their donors happy which is
6 DoorDash, Uber, Lyft, and all these stupid apps happy
7 because they donate to Transportation Alternatives.
8 Now, more deaths are gonna keep on happening with
9 these e-bike fires if the City Council, including
10 you, Chairwoman Powers, doesn't do the right thing
11 and make this bill a hearing. Don't say that you need
12 34 people to get a hearing. You get hearings on five
13 people, but all this is about is trying to please the
14 apps, and what happened recently is all the blame on
15 Transportation Alternatives, Open Plans, Los
16 Deliveristas, and all these stupid other non-profits
17 that got this City Council Committee under their
18 control.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

20 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Welcome.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Seeing no other
22 members of the public that wish to testify and having
23 no members of the public on Zoom, I'll move it back
24 to the Chair for her closing statement.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,
3 everyone, who took time to be here, especially the
4 drivers. We understand that taking time out of your
5 day is not being able to earn money in that moment so
6 we're glad we were able to have a quick hearing for
7 this bill.

8 With that, this Committee hearing is
9 adjourned. Thank you. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 3, 2024