



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 2199

Resolution calling upon the New York City Transit Authority to improve Access-A-Ride performance monitoring by establishing a standardized complaint tracking system for Access-A-Ride vendors and to make such information transparent and accessible to the public.

By Council Members Lappin, Avella, Barron, Brewer, Fidler, Gentile, Jackson, James, Koppell, Mark-Viverito, Nelson, Sanders Jr., Seabrook, Vacca and Gerson

Whereas, The New York City Transit Authority's (NYCTA) Access-A-Ride (AAR) program provides transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to utilize bus and train service; and

Whereas, AAR serves millions of people each year and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and

Whereas, AAR provides door-to-door service and transports individuals throughout the five boroughs and to and from some locations within Nassau and Westchester counties; and

Whereas, On July 28, 2009, New York City Comptroller William Thompson released an audit, Audit Report on Vendor Contracts with New York City Transit to Provide Access-A-Ride Services, examining whether the NYCTA adequately monitored AAR vendor compliance with contract provisions; and

Whereas, While the audit revealed that the NYCTA generally performed well and vendors met key contract indicators, there were several shortfalls stemming from the manner that AAR complaints were tracked; and

Whereas, In fiscal year 2009, the NYCTA contracted with 14 private companies to provide AAR services at a cost of \$242.5 million; and

Whereas, Over the same period of time, the NYCTA's Customer Relations Unit received 16,978 complaints from AAR customers regarding the service provided by the 14 vendors; and

Whereas, The major complaints included no-shows, late pickups, driver-related complaints,

unreasonable ride times and various issues with the vehicles; and

Whereas, No-show complaints are critically important to review and assess; and

Whereas, Of the recorded 5.8 million scheduled trips, AAR data indicates a no-show rate of 6.3 percent; and

Whereas, However, reasons for no-shows can vary greatly and while the causes can generally be attributed to either vendors or customers, in some instances, neither party is at fault; and

Whereas, Despite the importance of no-show complaints, the NYCTA does not have a formal policy for monitoring no-shows and there is some concern about whether the contractors are properly classifying them; and

Whereas, NYCTA is therefore unable to determine the full extent of no-shows and whether the vendors are mischaracterizing their performance results in an attempt to receive incentive payments or avoid being penalized with fees for lackluster performance; and

Whereas, In the audit, the Comptroller recommended that NYCTA take necessary steps to increase accountability in this area by preparing formal written guidelines to ensure that no-shows are reviewed in a systematic and consistent manner, enhancing and continuously monitoring no-show reviews and determining the error rates for no-show classifications; and

Whereas, Further, the Comptroller's audit also recommended improving the discussion between contract managers and vendors by requiring corrective action in response to negative trends and other identified problems; and

Whereas, Implementing these recommendations, as well as improving the monitoring and tracking of complaints and providing public access to such information would allow the public to have more faith in the AAR system and enable it to become a better performing and higher functioning service; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Transit

Authority to improve Access-A-Ride performance monitoring by establishing a standardized complaint tracking system for Access-A-Ride vendors and to make such information transparent and accessible to the public.

JM
LS# 7706
September 11, 2009