

June 17, 2013

Chair & Members
City of London Community & Protective
Services Committee

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the London Taxi Association, I would like to thank you for allowing us to present before you today. It is our intent to help foster a better relationship between our industry, the City of London and the London Police Service as we move forward. In doing so, as most of you are aware, our industry is dealing with major issues that have negatively affected our ability to remain economically viable. We are an industry which is probably the most highly regulated by the City of London and that is why we find ourselves before you today to articulate these concerns.

We have read Mr. Katolyk's report and although we are in agreement on some issues we find others to be detrimental to the future of our industry. We hope that we can persuade you to ask staff to revisit these issues and meet with representatives from our association and make changes that keep the interests of our clients and our drivers as the top priority.

Our concerns are as follows:

1 – Demerit Points

Although we absolutely agree that our drivers should be among the safest drivers on the road, we want to make sure that they are not unduly punished anymore than drivers who perform services similar to the service we provide, (bus drivers). We do not believe it is fair that a driver relinquish their license without being able to defend their record. We agree that any moving violation conviction should count against a driver's safety record but we believe that if there are convictions such as seat belt violations, these should be treated differently towards ones record.

2 – Vehicle Entry Age

As many of you are aware, the insurance costs that our drivers will encounter over the next few months will be excessive. Some members of this council have been quoted as saying, "if there was anything they could do to help, they would but insurance is out of their hands". We believe that you do have an opportunity to help. We ask that you allow the age of cars which we can put on the road to be raised to 4 years. This will allow our insurance rates to drop but another major benefit for the city would be the opportunity for our drivers to source **Hybrid Vehicles** which tend to be more expensive to purchase if they are 3 years old or less but the price drops dramatically at 4 years old.

3 – Brokers Records

We agree with the recommendation by staff regarding this matter. Having said that, we would like to go one step further regarding the issue that brokers have access to financial records of how much a driver earns on any shift. We believe it to be an invasion of privacy and the only entity entitled to this information is the driver and the CRA, (Canada Revenue Agency).

4 – Hours on Duty

We are in agreement with what is presented by Mr. Katolyk that this issue should be reviewed and clarified. It must be understood that drivers have long periods of time on many occasion between calls for service and have the ability to rest during these periods. We look forward to discussing this issue to clarify it further.

5 – Trip Sheets

This is an issue which causes our drivers much concern over their safety. If we know that an issue exists which has the ability to “tip off” would be robbers as to how much money is on hand, why wouldn't we do our best to get rid of that issue? Trip sheets have been banned in other jurisdictions just for this reason alone most notably in 2002 in the City of Toronto. We need to do all we can do to make it safer for all in the industry and this is one which should have been done a long time ago. Most of the information can still be retrieved through the meter which has an internal GPS and can relay all types of information which may be required by the police during possible investigations.

6 – Fare Fraud

This is an issue which has our drivers very concerned and has lead to many unsafe and scary situations for them during the course of their business day. We have brought this issue up with the City of London and the London Police Service. We are in agreement that this issue is reviewed and a workable solution be implemented at the earliest possible opportunity.

7 – Taxicab Advisory Committee

As what is likely the most heavily regulated industry by the City of London, it is somewhat perplexing that an advisory committee is not available to deal with issues affecting the industry. The City of London has many advisory committees to help deal with issues that the city faces. We strongly urge that a Taxi Industry Advisory Committee be established to help deal with issues affecting the city and the industry. We, as an organization would be very pleased to take part and offer our expertise going forward.

8 – Interior Vehicle Clean-up Charge

By now you may be aware of the possibility of this charge being levied against those whom leave behind something which drivers do not ask to be left behind. We are talking about those who get sick and throw up in vehicles. This can take a vehicle out of commission for up to 3 hours at a time while the vehicle is cleaned and disinfected. It is always up to the drivers to make sure the vehicle is cleaned and able to get back on the road. It is at their expense to have this done and can be very expensive. We are asking that a charge of \$150.00 be levied to those responsible to help cover the cleanup cost and also the time a cab is out of service. We would like to have this charge in place by September 1st of this year and we would be pleased to discuss this issue further with Mr. Katolyk.

The concerns that we have placed before you are ones which we believe to be relevant at this point. We do have other concerns but we believe that we can deal with those in future dialogue with Mr. Katolyk and Insp. Bill Chantler with the LPS. We are very hopeful and positive that you will ask staff to investigate these issues further and come back with the changes that will begin the process of breathing life back into an industry which is facing challenges which have been beyond our control. We would also like to point out the fact that this industry helps support hundreds of families in the City of London at a time when the city is facing a large challenge in its' employment numbers. These numbers can only be exacerbated if this industry is allowed to decline further without actions being taken which are of no or low cost to the City of London.

We thank you for your concern and attention to these matters and trust that you will address them at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Roger Caranci
On behalf of the London Taxi Association

