



## Submitted Testimony to the New York State Legislature 2017 Joint Budget Hearing on Transportation

February 15, 2017

Chairwoman Young, Chairman Farrell and distinguished members of the Senate and Assembly Joint Committee:

Lyft is a digital ride-sharing application that connects people with efficient, friendly and safe drivers in their community. We thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony to share with you the benefits of ridesharing for the State, and to express Lyft's support for Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposal as it relates to Ridesharing (**Article VII, TED Part G**).

Lyft was the first company to establish peer-to-peer, on-demand ridesharing, and is currently the fastest growing rideshare company in the United States. Today, Lyft connects nearly 18 million people a month with efficient, affordable and safe rides in over 250 communities across the country.

Lyft was founded with the mission of improving lives by offering the world's best transportation, and in less than five years we have proven to be a powerful driver of positive change with respect to economic empowerment, enhancing the efficiency of public transportation, and connecting communities previously underserved by prior transportation options. The proof is in the data. Since our launch in 2012, Lyft has worked to reduce traffic and congestion, increase mobility options, prevent D.U.I.s, reduce assault related arrests, stimulate local economies, and provide economic opportunities for drivers.

As of this morning, 38 states, including New Jersey and Pennsylvania, have passed legislation that regulates Lyft and similar ridesharing companies in a safe and comprehensive manner. We hope that New York will join that effort and allow consumers the option to choose Lyft in cities across the Empire State.

Supporting sensible statewide legislation creates a framework that promotes predictability and consistency in Upstate communities that lack transportation options. We believe a passenger who uses Lyft in Buffalo or Syracuse should expect the same level of safety, service and regulatory consistency as they will encounter in Albany, Poughkeepsie, Hempstead or the more than 250+ cities across the nation where they can currently open our app and request a ride. People like our service because they know what they are going to get: a safe, affordable ride with great customer service .

The proposal before the Legislature, Article VII TED Part G, closely reflects the national model that has been carefully considered, negotiated, and debated in over 38 other states across the nation. **The proposal before the Legislature reflects a carefully crafted balance that would allow ridesharing companies to operate statewide, while also maintaining public safety.** Specifically, the bill would:

- **Increase insurance coverage limits to account for risk.** Currently, commercial limits for for-hire vehicles Upstate are set at \$25,000 in per-person bodily injury and \$50,000 in per-incident bodily injury (\$25,000/\$50,000), a limit which applies for the duration of the ride. This bill proposes doubling these current limits (\$50,000/\$100,000) during “period one,” or the time when there is no passenger in the car. Once a driver accepts a ride and throughout the process of transporting a passenger, this bill proposes setting the limit at \$1 million blanket coverage. **That is almost 4X higher than current requirements for upstate for-hire vehicles.**
- **Create consistent regulations for the entire industry.** The Governor’s Executive Budget Proposal creates a system in which the Department of Motor Vehicles issues TNC industry licenses to a TNC, which must then meet all legal, financial, administrative requirements, including screening and insuring drivers, as a condition of maintaining that industry license. . The bill language requires non-discriminatory business practices on the basis of destination, race, color, national origin, religious belief or affiliation, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or gender identification of potential riders and drivers, both during the employment screening process and during process of providing a ride.
- **Set strong driver requirements.** TNCs, in order to ensure the safety of riders and other vehicles on the road, must meet state mandated standards in approving any drivers. Some of the stringent driver requirements in the proposed bill include:
  1. Mandated background checks conducted by accredited, independent third parties and state standards for disqualifying drivers, including the participation in the DMV’s License Event Notification Service (LENS) program.
  2. Prohibition from picking up street hails or accepting cash fares.
  3. Distinctive trade dress to help passengers and law enforcement in identifying TNC vehicles.
  4. Strong vehicle standards regarding, age, vehicle inspections to ensure that only the most responsible drivers and safest vehicles are being used to transport passengers.
- **Create a TNC Drivers Injury Compensation Fund.** To benefit Upstate TNC drivers, the bill establishes a fund that would mirror the New York City Black Car Fund. The Black Car Fund currently provides workers’ compensation benefits to black car drivers in New York City. The bill language structures the TNC Drivers Injury Compensation Fund in accordance with the Black Car Fund.

- **Establish the New York State TNC Accessibility Task Force.** It will be the responsibility of the Task Force to analyze and advise on how to maximize effective and integrated transportation services for persons with disabilities and will be the responsibility of TNCs to adopt to the extent possible, the recommendations of the Task Force.

Lyft remains eager and ready to begin operations in New York State. We are pleased to have support of 80 percent of consumers across the State who are calling for ridesharing services, and look forward to working with the distinguished members of the Legislature and the Governor to bring the numerous benefits of ridesharing for all New Yorkers.

We believe Budget bill TED Part G strikes the right balance and for these reasons, Lyft **SUPPORTS** this budget item.