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HB 6547

Public Hearing: 3-4-09

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
FROM: METRO TAXI
DATE: MARCH 4, 2009

RE: **H. B. No. 6547 AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTY FOR VIOLATIONS OF CERTAIN STATUTORY OR REGULATORY PROVISIONS CONCERNING TAXICABS.**

Metro Taxi, Inc. is the states largest taxicab company operating in the greater New Haven and Bridgeport areas. We run 160 cabs and contract with almost 200 drivers and employ nearly 50 support staff. We are committed to providing the public with fast efficient taxicab service 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Metro Taxi strongly opposes HB 6547, An Act Increasing the Penalty for Violations of Certain Statutory or Regulatory Provisions Concerning Taxicabs, particularly in light of the fact that two comprehensive bills addressing issues surrounding the taxi industry are currently under consideration in the Program Review and Investigations (PRI) Committee.

In fact, the exact subject matter of this individual bill is also found in section 1 of SB902, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee Concerning the Safety of Taxicab and Livery Vehicles, which was jointly heard by the PRI and Transportation committees on February 20th.

Metro Taxi respectfully submits that this issue, like the many others included in the comprehensive bills, needs to be addressed in conjunction with the greater overall changes which will hopefully result from deliberations on those bills.

Of particular concern to Metro Taxi is the fact that simply multiplying the amount certificate holders can be fined by a factor of ten will not fairly bring about the desired compliance without also contemplating the associated issues of how the party levied the fine is notified along with identifying and fining the party actually committing the violation.

Metro Taxi believes that any increase in fines should be coupled with changes to who the fine is actually levied against (the driver, the vehicle owner, the certificate holder) depending on which party is actually committing the violation. It should also contain clear notice provisions so that a

fine is not noticed to one party and then collected against another, as has been the situation where a driver is noticed of a fine, then levied against a certificate holder whom the driver never informed. Again this is a problem which in the past has resulted in thirty days or more of fines being levied, which multiplied by ten would be untenable, and not in the spirit of gaining compliance and safeguarding the riding public.

As the previous example highlights, problems which currently exist with the system of fining to encourage compliance would only be exacerbated by ten under this stand alone bill.

Metro Taxi firmly believes the opportunity exists currently in the other legislation to address the concerns raised by this bill in a comprehensive way that is fair to the regulators, the service providers and the riding public.