

Greater New Haven Clean Cities Coalition, Inc.

Testimony of Lee Grannis

Coordinator, Greater New Haven Clean Cities Coalition, Inc.

Transportation Committee

March 2, 2015

Good afternoon, Chairpersons Senator Leone and Representative Guerrero and members of the **Transportation Committee**, my name is **Lee Grannis**, and I am the **Coordinator, Greater New Haven Clean Cities Coalition, Inc.**

I am here today to testify in regard to:

PHB 6349 An Act Concerning Ride-Sharing Companies and Drivers

The Greater New Haven Clean Cities Coalition (GNHCCC) is a designated US Department of Energy Clean Cities Coalition. The Clean Cities program was created by the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (EPA 92) and further empowered by subsequent Energy Policy Acts enacted by the US Congress. The mission of the Clean Cities program is to reduce this country's dependence on foreign petroleum and to reduce toxic mobile source emissions. The means to accomplish this mission and related goals is through public-private partnerships focusing on the deployment of commercially viable alternative fuels and their corresponding vehicles. The term alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) are listed in EPA 92 and later US Energy Policy Acts. In the case of this testimony the specific fuel and AFV is compressed natural gas (CNG) taxis.

The GNHCCC was instrumental in assisting both Yellow Cab and Metro Taxi the two largest taxi companies in Connecticut to upgrade their taxi fleets to compressed natural gas (CNG) taxis starting in 2011 and completed the project in 2014. The GNHCCC was the recipient of a ARRA Grant for the US Department of Energy that paid half the cost of the CNG filling stations and paid the incremental cost of deploying the CNG taxis. Yellow Cab and Metro Taxi deployed 105 CNG taxis each, with 70 at each company being handicapped accessible taxis. The taxis are equipped with state of the art GPS systems, interior and exterior cameras, and several safety devices. This was the largest and first major deployment of handicapped accessible CNG taxis in this country. This deployment was also backed up by state of the art dispatch centers at each company. In addition each company offered additional credit for those passengers enrolled in their respective paratransit systems programs. Each CNG taxi is 30 % less polluting related to toxic mobile source emissions and "Green House Gases" (GHG) emissions. In addition the fuel, natural gas, comes from natural gas sources in the United States and is a much cheaper fuel depending on the transportation fuel market.

The State of Connecticut through regulations put in place by state and federal laws and codes require all taxis/cabs to undergo a very rigorous set of requirements to be allowed to carry passengers well as handicapped passengers. Yellow Cab has abided by these rules and regulations in a vigilant manner, while offering handicapped accessibility in over 70 of its taxis.

The addition of CNG cabs required Yellow Cab to further invest in new facility infrastructure, training and outreach to the public. Local first responders were trained both by Yellow Cab personnel and the GNHCCC in what to expect in case of an accident involving CNG vehicles. Over one thousand first responders were trained in various sessions around the state as well as Yellow Cab's operating area. To date the CNG powered vehicles have performed well above expectations when involved in inevitable accidents. CNG fueled cabs are safe and less likely to be involved in a vehicle fire especially from a rear end collision, which is well documented.

It is without logic that a company like **Uber** can mask the way they do business, which is essentially a taxi company, and then offer the same service as a taxi company and not be required to meet the standards of regulated taxi companies. **Uber** does not have the professional manned fleet of handicapped accessible, clean emission vehicles and the safety standards associated with Companies like **Metro and Yellow Cab Company of Bloomfield.**

Thank you,

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