
From: Stewart, Richard
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2019 4:50 PM
Subject: Most of BC Will Not Be Getting Ride-Hailing

Dear Mayor,

My name is Richard Stewart, Mayor of Coquitlam. I'm following up with you to ask you to please sign on to our request to the Province to properly embrace ride-hailing/ride-sharing without unnecessary barriers.

As you likely know, the Province has rejected the recommendations of the All-Party committee on a key point, and will instead be requiring a Class 4 Commercial Driver's License for drivers under a ride-hailing system. The all-party committee felt that Class 4 was inappropriate and would unduly restrict supply, and that safeguards could be put in place to ensure a level of passenger safety that was at least as strong as in the taxi industry, without limiting the supply of drivers. Transportation Minister Trevena has remained steadfast that she rejects the All-Party committee's recommendation.

As a result of the Province's decision, both Uber and Lyft have announced that they will only provide ride-hailing service in Metro Vancouver, as they cannot count on their being sufficient holders of commercial Class 4 licenses in the rest of the Province to provide reliable service. So, despite this government's commitment that ride-hailing would be available by Christmas 2017, we will not see any ride-hailing in the vast majority of the province in the foreseeable future.

As a suburb of Vancouver, we in Coquitlam face many of the issues that communities across the province face related to the taxi monopoly and the Province's rejection of ride-hailing as a modern

solution to those challenges. Our residents in Metro Vancouver suburbs – like so many other communities across the Province – find a shortage of taxi service (particularly on weekend evenings), the common problem of trip-refusal from downtown Vancouver to the suburbs, etc. We have heard from many other communities that taxi service in smaller communities can be problematic in many other ways. Many communities have been waiting years for an alternative form of passenger transportation, one that has been proven effective and efficient around the world.

The Province also appears to be contemplating other methods to manage/limit the supply of ride-hailing, which will have the result of supporting the existing taxi monopoly, and which will restrict the availability of rides across the province, potentially putting our residents at risk because of an inability to secure a safe ride home. These risks --including physical assault, sexual assault, robbery/theft, wildlife conflict, severe weather, and injury – can be mitigated by allowing an adequate and scalable supply of safe rides home, a supply that isn't artificially or arbitrarily limited to protect a monopoly.

Attached is a letter I've written to Transportation Minister Claire Trevena, which I had intended to send myself. However, colleagues from other jurisdictions have suggested that they would like to sign on to a joint letter, so I have made the appropriate adjustments to what is now a Joint Letter to Transportation Minister Claire Trevena.

If you agree and would like to express support for ride-hailing, which has proven popular in jurisdictions across North America and throughout the world, please respond with a "Count me in!" (or just a "Yes") and I'll add your name to the letter. And if any of your elected colleagues (Councillors, RD members, School Board Trustees, etc.) might also be supportive, please forward this for their consideration as well. Some of you have already signed-on, and I thank you; please forward it on to your colleagues.

Hoping to see many of you next week at UBCM.

Richard

Richard Stewart, Mayor
City of Coquitlam

September __, 2019

Joint Mayors' Letter to BC Transportation Minister Claire Trevena on Ridehailing

Signed by Mayors and Councillors from across BC

Dear Minister Trevena,

We write to you with strong concern over the Province of BC's intent related to ridehailing.

The current taxi system in BC does not serve our communities and residents properly. The challenges with the supply-managed taxi monopoly are well-documented, and we hear regularly from residents in our communities of the failures of this outdated transportation system, such as the inability of residents to get a taxi, trip refusal (particularly back to the suburbs), prebooked taxis not arriving, language barriers, routing issues, etc. Some of these failures can create unreasonable risks to our residents, including:

- Motorists who are impaired and who, unable to get a taxi, make a poor choice to drive,
- Persons who are unable to get a ride, and who are forced to take risks (accepting a ride from a stranger, walking alone, etc.)
- Persons with ambulant disabilities, who may have fewer options when the supply of passenger transportation is restricted.

Particularly in the suburbs, we elected officials have heard horrible resident experiences resulting from the inability to secure a taxi – particularly late-at-night – including hate crimes (racial, LGBTQ, etc.), physical assault, sexual assault, robbery/theft, wildlife conflict, severe weather, and injury. In BC we have a supply-managed taxi system that very regularly fails to provide adequate service for some of their customers – our residents – putting them at risk.

Many have urged successive Provincial governments to embrace ride-hailing programs to fill the gaps in the taxi monopoly, gaps that disproportionately affect residents of the suburbs, and which particularly create unreasonable risks for women, ambulant disabled, tourists/visitors, persons with language barriers, and other vulnerable populations. You and your government have committed to bring in ridehailing for British Columbia; however, based on discussions we've had with you, and based on the initial details of the proposed program here in BC, we have serious concerns that the main gaps and resultant risks will not be addressed appropriately by the proposals currently being pursued, especially the unnecessary imposition of Class 4 licences on ridehail drivers and suggestions around supply-management.

We urge the Ministry to instead adopt the regulations put forward by the all-party committee, after several consultations, back in March. We strongly believe these recommendations would enable ridehailing to meet the needs of our constituents.

Supply Management

At present, it is often very difficult for our residents visiting urban centres and other locations to get a ride back to their communities, particularly late at night, a situation that is predictable when

inadequate rides are available. As well, as a society, we urge citizens who may be impaired by drugs or alcohol to “take a cab”, yet we ration the availability of cabs, and restrict the availability of alternative forms of “safe ride home”.

We believe there is no valid public policy reason to limit the supply of rides or to impose Class 4 licence requirements on ridehail drivers, and that the supply-management of safe rides home is counter to what should be the number one priority of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. We also believe that the recommendations of the Mayors’ Council on Regional Transportation at TransLink related to pricing and supply would serve well toward improving access to ride-hailing service during periods when greater supply is needed.

Excessive Licensing Requirements

Minister, we understand that you have taken the position that, unlike most other jurisdictions in North America, BC will restrict the provision of ridehailing service to drivers with a commercial Class 4 driver’s license. We believe this one requirement will significantly encumber or impede ridehailing, and ultimately leave it unable to fill the gaps listed above, while providing no benefit. We believe that this requirement will leave many with the impression that government is feigning support for ridehailing publicly while putting in place regulations to protect the taxi industry, regulations that significantly shackle the ridehailing technology that has been demonstrated to be effective, efficient and safe. We urge government to do as other jurisdictions around the world and allow Class 5 licensing, along with annual or continual monitoring of driver abstracts and annual criminal record checks (more stringent than for taxi drivers).

Three Commitments

Minister, your Mandate Letter mentions your government’s “three key commitments to British Columbians”:

... to make life more **affordable** make lives easier.

... to deliver the services that people count on ... [so that] services are **available** and **effective**.

... to build a strong, sustainable, **innovative** economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy and well-connected....

Minister, we urge you to not put in place barriers that restrict the **affordability, availability, effectiveness** and **innovation** offered by ridehailing technology. We urge you to reject supply-management, price controls, and excessive regulation, and to fully embrace ridehailing and the public safety, affordability, and equity that ridehailing offers to British Columbians.

Thank you,

Yours truly,

Richard Stewart, Mayor
City of Coquitlam

And these other Local Government elected officials