

Legislation Text

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Respectfully requesting that the Pennsylvania Legislature authorize an additional 300 taxi medallions to provide modern, green, wheelchair accessible taxi cabs with bike racks to meet the existing needs of Philadelphia's underserved ridership and using the proceeds to reduce the wage tax.

WHEREAS, Council's Committee on Global Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative Economy and the Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities held a joint hearing on February 25, 2014 to "investigate the current status of taxi cabs in the City and the impact of modernizing and increasing the number of taxi cabs as it relates to the continued efforts of making Philadelphia a globally competitive, world class destination City"; and

WHEREAS, There are currently a total of 1,599 taxi cabs operating legally within the City; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has far less cabs operating within the City in comparison to other major US cities. The ratio of residents per taxi cab is the following: Philadelphia, 967 residents per taxi cab; New York City (Manhattan only), 138 residents per taxi cab; Boston, 349 residents per taxi cab; and Chicago, 387 residents per taxi cab; furthermore, there are currently only 7 wheelchair accessible taxi cabs in the City, with 128,856 residents living with an ambulatory disability making the ratio of 1 accessible taxi cab for every 18,408 residents with an ambulatory disability; and

WHEREAS, Cities are the economic engines of the global economy and improved taxi cab services will better position Philadelphia to capitalize on attracting tourism and other business opportunities; for example, New York City and Chicago already have thousands of alternative fuel cabs while Philadelphia currently has none; and

WHEREAS, Additional medallions are needed to meet the needs of Philadelphia's riders through more modern, green, and wheelchair accessible taxi cabs with bike racks; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth has made a positive step in making additional medallions available by enacting legislation on July 5, 2012 authorizing 15 new medallions per year over a period of ten years; however, this increase is inadequate to transforming Philadelphia's taxi fleet to be competitive with other major cities, both nationally and globally; and

WHEREAS, An effort to make Philadelphia's taxi cab services to be more accessible, modern, and competitive, must also involve improving working conditions for taxi drivers that currently are not covered under the vehicle insurance, workers' compensation, or any other health benefits; and

WHEREAS, The estimated revenue that can be generated from each medallion ranges from \$350,000 to \$500,000. Assuming the highest estimate, new revenue of \$150,000,000 can be potentially generated by the sale of 300 medallions of which \$25,000,000 could be allocated to the Commonwealth and \$25,000,000 each for five years to the reduction of the City of Philadelphia's wage tax with a portion to be directed to a taxi drivers' relief fund; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby respectfully requests that the Pennsylvania Legislature authorize an additional 300 taxi medallions to provide modern, green, wheelchair accessible taxi cabs with bike racks to meet the existing needs of Philadelphia's underserved ridership and using the proceeds to reduce the wage tax.