



Puget Sound Taxi Driver

September 2013

FORE TIMES

News for the Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association (WWTCOA) - Teamsters Local 117

Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 (206) 441-4860 • www.teamstertaxi.org

TAXI OPERATORS PROTEST!

Taxis demand that the City take immediate action to enforce the law.



Taxis deliver "Citation for Inaction" to the office of Seattle Mayor, Mike McGinn.

Puget Sound taxicab operators and their community allies converged on City Hall on Friday, August 2nd to demand fairness and a level playing field in Seattle's personal transportation industry.

The drivers circled the block blaring their horns, then parked their cabs en masse on 4th Ave. demanding that city officials take immediate action.

Meanwhile, a delegation of drivers from the **Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association (WWTCOA)** delivered a "Citation for Inaction" to the mayor's office for the City's failure to enforce existing laws that protect taxi drivers and their families.

"We demand that the City do its job and start enforcing existing laws," said Salah Mohamed, a driver with Yellow Cab and a member of the WWTCOA leadership council. "The City is failing us, and we are

not able to support our families as a result."

For months, taxi drivers have urged the City to crack down on violators who are stealing their fares. They have met with city councilmembers and testified at public hearings. In June, dozens of drivers delivered a petition to the mayor's office with over 500 signatures demanding that the City take action.

A QUESTION OF ENFORCEMENT

Under existing law, only metered taxicab operators are permitted to use designated taxi stands or to stop and pick up passengers who hail them on the street. Limousine and other flat-rate drivers are not allowed to pick up passengers unless the rides are pre-arranged and the rates are pre-negotiated between the driver and the passenger.

"Too many unlicensed drivers are breaking the law and the City is doing nothing," Mohamed said.

The City has just one inspector on the street who is authorized to issue tickets to violators in an industry with 1,400 drivers. Lack of enforcement allows flat-rate vehicles to illegally undercut the fares of licensed cabs.

Taxi drivers have testified multiple times at the City's **Committee on Taxis, For-Hires, and Limousines Regulations** meetings, calling for greater enforcement, but so far

the City has not taken concrete steps to address the problem.

The Committee intends to release a report with its findings from its study of the industry on Tuesday, September 3 at City Hall at 5:30 p.m.

All WWTCOA members should plan to attend this important event! ●



WWTCOA ANNUAL MEETING YIELDS NEW COUNCIL

WWTCOA celebrates first year with review and plans for the future

Teamster taxicab operators gathered on Saturday, July 27 for the **Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association's** (WWTCOA) annual meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss successes and challenges in the association's first year and to set goals and plan for the future.

Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117 and the Union's principal officer, moderated the event.

"Your effort to organize yourselves into an association is an inspiration to taxicab operators across the country," she said.

FIGHT FOR CHANGE REQUIRES PATIENCE

Several WWTCOA members, including Jaquinder Singh, a driver with Yellow Airport, spoke about the association's accomplishments in its first year:

"I would like to congratulate the WWTCOA

for its successful 1-year completion with the Teamsters. The Teamsters have always offered great assistance in solving our problems. But the fight for workers' rights is long and requires patience. I would like to request that we all tell drivers who are not Teamsters the benefits of the Union because the City will only listen to us if we are united," he said.

At the meeting, members also submitted nominations for the WWTCOA Leadership Council for the 2013-2014 calendar year. There was only one nomination for every seat on the council. No seat had multiple nominations; therefore,

no election was necessary. Your new WWTCOA Leadership Council will meet again on August 22. ●

Congratulations!

Your New Leadership Council for 2013-2014



WWTCOA Upcoming Events and News:

STUDY RESULTS TO BE RELEASED ON SEPTEMBER 3

The Seattle City Council's **Committee on Taxi, For-Hire and Limousine Regulations** will announce the results of its long-awaited study of the industry on Tuesday, September 3 at 5:30 p.m. It is incredibly important that as many taxi operators as possible attend this presentation. The event will take place at Seattle City Hall. Please try to arrive early, as it is liable to be crowded. For more information, contact Dawn at 206- 441-4860 ext 1254.

TAXICAB ADVISORY COMMISSION

There is a vacancy on the **Seattle/ King County Taxicab Advisory Commission**, and we are currently seeking volunteers to fill the position. If interested, contact Dawn at 206- 441-4860 ext 1254. You must be a lease-driver of a metered taxicab to apply.

MEETINGS WITH KING COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Members of the newly-elected WWTCOA Leadership Council along with Dawn Gearhart of Teamsters Local 117, met with **King County Councilmember Pete Von Reichbauer** on Tuesday, August 20.

The purpose of these meetings with the King County Council is to educate local politicians on issues that impact taxis. If you are interested in helping to educate King County councilmembers, contact Dawn at 206- 441-4860 ext 1254.

INSURANCE UPDATE

We are still waiting on lost run data from City drivers and Farwest as well as any policies from 2008-2010, and cannot confirm a policy without this information. Please contact Dawn 206- 441-4860 ext 1254 with this info.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS INSPECTION UPDATE

You have the right to a second opinion on any adverse finding during an inspection. Inspectors must take photos and document any issues they note during the first exam at the time the vehicle is inspected. WWTCOA Leadership Council Members and Teamsters 117 are working to develop a fair appeals process for any failed inspections.

This is a direct result of action taken by members of the WWTCOA and Teamsters 117 following the unfair failure of a vehicle inspection which nearly resulted in a \$50 penalty and a suspended license. The decision was overturned and the operator was able to get back to work.

Bhupinder Singh (Orange Cab 890) and Jagjit Singh (Orange Cab 754) took a stand and won!