

Testimony of Pete Gould, Firefly Systems  
Los Angeles City Council, Transportation Committee

March 27, 2019

- Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Pete Gould with Firefly.
- Since we last spoke with the Committee, there is an emerging consensus that we can and should be moving away from the ban in this motion and toward a pilot program for developing sensible regulations that enable innovation and boosts driver income while ensuring the devices are safe.
- This approach now has the support of the LADOT, the Taxi Commission, the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the taxi industry, and Firefly. Now, we are respectfully asking this Committee for its support, too.
- We support this approach, and urge the Committee to seek input from all sides on how best to structure such a pilot program.
- We have heard much hyperbole about what would happen if our displays aren't banned immediately. However, Firefly has been operating in Los Angeles for close to a year without these horror stories coming to bear.
- We proactively conducted independent safety and compliance testing, and have conducted ourselves as trusted members of the community, and we will continue to do so in the future.
- It feels strange to be here discussing a motion to take away driver income.
- I say that because right now, outside of this Committee room and across LA, taxi and rideshare drivers are both facing scary economic hardships and anxieties.

Date: 3-27-19  
Submitted in Tran Committee  
Council File No: 19-0104  
Item No.: 12  
Deputy: Public

- Imagine the week that a driver would be having if this motion passes and they have taken from them the \$300 per month they have relied upon from Firefly, while also learning of a 25% cut overnight on their primary income from TNCs.
- For drivers and their families this would be catastrophic, as they were already just barely getting by financially.
- And taxi drivers are facing an upcoming crisis due to the LAX construction that will take away their only remaining advantage over rideshare companies at the airport.
- They have already faced one disruptive shock after another these last 7 years, and this could be the last straw.
- It would be unconscionable for the response to these crises to come in the form of a motion to restrict their earning potential rather than an all hands on deck effort to help them survive and innovate.

### **Taxi Driver Conditions**

- I don't need to tell this Committee that taxi drivers in LA are hurting and that matters are only getting more dire.
- Even before the arrival of Uber and Lyft, taxi drivers were reported to earn just \$8.63 per hour and were working an average of 72 hours per week.
- Since the arrival of TNCs in 2012, it has been reported that taxi trips have declined by more than 30%, with taxis increasingly relying on trips from LAX as the one dependable source of trips and income.
- But later this summer, LAX will commence a massive, multi-year construction and renovation project that is likely to force taxis to move from their current curbside terminal lines out to a remote staging lot alongside the TNCs.
- This move will eliminate the one remaining advantage that taxis have over TNCs, and threatens the industry with extinction.

- When that time comes, they will ask what the City Council did or did not do to protect them, and if this motion were to pass today, their answer would be obvious. Please do the right thing. Protect taxi drivers.

### **TNC Driver Conditions**

- While the situation for taxi drivers has been addressed by my colleagues, rideshare drivers are not faring much better themselves.
- The UCLA Labor Center released a survey of LA Rideshare drivers in which 44% of drivers reported having difficulty paying expenses like gas, insurance, and maintenance and found that many drivers are sleeping and eating in their cars between trips and even living in their vehicles overnight.
- Now rideshare drivers in LA are facing another cut to their rates down from \$0.80 to \$0.60 per mile, and that's only when they have a passenger.
- On Monday, they launched a strike because they cannot afford to live in such an expensive City at these rates.
- Banning rooftop advertising, as this motion asks you to do, prevents rideshare drivers from diversifying their income streams and places them solely at the mercy of pre-IPO rate cut wars.

### **Firefly Driver Statistics**

- Not only does Firefly work directly with drivers to boost their incomes, we are doing so with drivers that live in many of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the region.
- We conducted an analysis of our current drivers and those on our waiting list to demonstrate to the Committee what neighborhoods would be hurt the most if this ban were passed.

- Of the top 25 zip codes in which our drivers reside, we found that these neighborhoods have:
  - A median income that is 25% below the City-wide level.
  - A higher population of foreign born and immigrant residents; and
  - A 66% higher African-American share of their population than the entire City.  
(15% African-American, compared to 8.9% for city-wide)
- We have also provided the Committee members with a one-page overview of the drivers that benefit the most from partnering with Firefly and the map of the communities in which they live to show where the economic boost from Firefly really goes.
- We urge you to oppose this motion and instead support a pilot program to support these communities and benefit taxi drivers in our neighborhoods to earn a more livable wage.



# Los Angeles Times

## **‘I’m really struggling’: Facing pay cuts, some ride-hailing drivers prepare to strike**

**By JOHANA BHUIYAN**  
**MARCH 23, 2019**

Frustrations are mounting among some Uber and Lyft drivers about wages and treatment. But because ride-hailing drivers are classified as independent contractors instead of employees, unionizing — a common way for discontented workers to bring about change — is something of a non-starter.

So in a parking lot outside Los Angeles International Airport, where Uber and Lyft drivers wait for ride requests, some ride-hailing workers are charting their own course.

It’s there that drivers are trying to recruit their colleagues to protest pay cuts by Uber last week that slashed per-mile pay from 80 cents to 60 cents in Los Angeles County and parts of Orange County. They are planning to strike Monday, refusing to drive for both Uber and Lyft in a move they hope will mark an early step in a broader push for higher wages.

It’s not the first attempt by drivers to stage a strike against Uber and Lyft — many of the same drivers organized a similar protest at LAX in 2017. The ride-hailing workers, this time led by a group called Rideshare Drivers United, say past strikes have lacked cohesive strategy and planning, ultimately leading to disparate demands and low attendance.

Part of the problem, they say, is that the drivers’ fight has long fixated on their classification as independent contractors — a battle that has so far proved fruitless. Though they would still prefer to be classified as employees, they hope they can unite a broader swath of the workforce by focusing first on pay.

“That’s what we need and the best way is to get there quickly,” said Nicole Moore, a part-time Uber driver who has become one of a handful of de facto leaders of the movement.

“There is no doubt that if we are employees we have the right to be protected by national laws that provide a pathway to organizing and give us a right to a contract at the end of our fight,” Moore said.

But “drivers need gas in the car ... so that we can actually pay our rent and put food on the table for our family.”

The group, which Moore said has grown from 200 in 2017 to about 3,000, is demanding Uber increase fares 25% — back to rates the company rolled out in September 2018.

“For these rates I might as well be working at the Amazon warehouse,” she said.

Uber says it altered the rates because the pay scale it introduced last September “did not have the intended impact.” The company contends other changes, including a higher per-minute rate and new driver promotions, will improve take-home pay.

“You can expect average driver earnings in LA to be comparable with other rideshare opportunities and pre-September average earnings,” Uber wrote in an email to drivers.

Although Lyft hasn’t followed Uber’s recent rate cuts in Los Angeles, drivers are planning a 25-hour strike against both companies because each has already slashed fares to levels some consider untenable.

Sinakhone Keodara drives for Lyft using a vehicle he rented from the company. Keodara became homeless in September after pouring money into building his own app and took up driving for Lyft to get himself on his feet. He has resorted to paying \$25 a night to stay at a local Korean spa that allows overnight guests. But his earnings on Lyft aren’t always enough to cover that fee in addition to the \$240 weekly payment for the car and the cost of gas. On those nights, his car doubles as his home.

“I’m not the only one,” Keodara said.

“I’m really struggling,” he said. “But I feel like it’s time for us to humanize our struggle. Let people know what’s really going on with us as we’re driving for Lyft and Uber trying to survive and this is what is happening to us.”

Though Uber and Lyft have both made efforts to appease current drivers and recruit new ones, protests and strikes have so far done little to move wages. With both companies planning initial public offerings, the firms have even more reason to focus on cutting costs.

Another obstacle for the demonstrators is organizing an inherently disorganized workforce. Because Uber and Lyft drivers only interact with the company through apps, there’s no one place where they can spread the word and no picket line where they can rally for their cause. Some drivers and many passengers might not even realize a strike is underway on March 25.

“I mean we can’t deliver a financial blow that’s going to wound them meaningfully,” said Keith Eberl, a full-time Uber driver. “But we can certainly get their attention. The realization they might have is that this isn’t drivers getting together in a crunch to do one

strike and go their separate ways. This is an expanding, growing organization that's been using this action and our previous action to simultaneously grow the membership."

Driver victories in New York City, where a local regulator has imposed a minimum wage for Uber and Lyft contractors, have given the organizers hope.

They say there has been interest from drivers in San Diego and Washington, D.C., about starting their own chapters.

Rideshare Drivers United organizers received support, including about \$500 in donations to help cover any costs related to the strike, from a group of about 200 traditional unions at a recent meeting at the Los Angeles County Labor Federation.

While the organizers want to eventually secure a place among the established unions, the focus now is on spreading the word among a diffuse workforce.

"This is about person-to-person organizing," Moore said.

One method is through an app they've built that matches organizers with drivers who have expressed interest in their campaign. Organizers discuss drivers' concerns, promote the strike and identify potential leaders. Keodara — who can't afford to take any time off from driving — said it allows him to stay involved.



# La Opinión

Loose Translation:

## Advances in technology will help taxi drivers survive!

"Drivers of shared travel services like Uber and Lyft are already using these mobile digital screens, giving their drivers the opportunity to increase their income. Taxi drivers should not be treated differently. '

**BY: RUBEN GUERRA**  
**March 21, 2019**

Los Angeles has long been the epicenter for innovation, and for finding new ways to solve difficult problems. The latest opportunity is a smart screen digital rooftop advertising platform that allows taxi drivers to use their vehicle's roof for messaging and information sharing, and earn an extra \$300 a month.

This is a win-win: taxi drivers earn meaningful revenue on top of their regular fares without driving additional hours and without increasing fares to passengers, and Los Angeles pedestrians are made aware of local programs and businesses. We should make it easier, not harder, for smart technologies like this to enter our City.

Taxi drivers in the Los Angeles area, many of whom are immigrants, are facing the dark reality of an eroding market share and troubling financial outlook. With growing competition in the rideshare marketplace, taxi drivers are finding it harder and harder to stay in business. Today, taxi drivers in our City frequently don't make enough money in a day to cover the cost of gas or other vehicle expenses. This means drivers already working long hours are finding themselves under pressure to work even longer hours to maintain their earnings, and that number is going up. What was once a flourishing business is now a daily fight to stay afloat.

As Chairman and CEO of the Latin Business Association, I have seen firsthand how this problem effects local communities. Some of the poorest communities are harmed the most.

Enter the startup company Firefly, which pairs its LED smart screen technology with existing vehicles to display "situationally aware" ads to pedestrians in busy areas. The screens' unique technology can make the vehicle a free WiFi hotspot for a passenger – innovation that can help taxi drivers compete and earn a living.

This smart screen technology also provides another advertising opportunity for local and small businesses who are often cut out of other platforms by larger competitors. Businesses can choose to geo-fence ads, benefitting Latino businesses in particular who can extend their reach through bilingual advertisements based on location.

In addition, at least 10% of the company's total inventory in Los Angeles is given pro-bono to community organizations and local government initiatives. In Los Angeles, Firefly will help spread Amber Alerts, overriding every screen in the area when a new alert is active, and runs free ads for

groups ranging from the Coalition for Clean Air, to People Assisting the Homeless, to the Police Protective League of Los Angeles.

Drivers of rideshare services like Uber and Lyft are already using these mobile smart screens, giving their drivers a chance to supplement their income. Taxi drivers should not be treated differently. Yet some City officials are trying to prevent taxi drivers from utilizing this technology. This is a misguided effort that will hurt drivers and hamper innovation.

Firefly is the type of innovative business that helps make Los Angeles such a great city. I support the expanded use of this technology in the City of Los Angeles and everywhere else.

*Ruben Guerra is Chairman and CEO of the Latin Business Association*

*The Latin Business Association is a private non-profit association that represents more than 800,000 Latin businesses in California.*

Link: <https://laopinion.com/2019/03/21/avances-en-la-tecnologia-ayudaran-a-los-taxistas-a-sobrevivir/>



# La Opinión

## ¡Avances en la tecnología ayudarán a los taxistas a sobrevivir!

**‘Los conductores de servicios de viaje compartidos como Uber y Lyft ya están usando estas pantallas digitales móviles, dándoles a sus conductores la oportunidad de aumentar sus ingresos. Los taxistas no deben ser tratados de manera diferente’.**

**POR: RUBÉN GUERRA  
21 MARZO 2019**

La ciudad de Los Ángeles es uno de los centros épicos de la innovación tecnológica que intenta solucionar nuevos problemas. Una nueva solución para las carteleras son los tableros digitales que pueden ser puestos en el techo de los carros. Esta nueva innovación permite que los taxistas tengan un ingreso de 300 dólares al mes sin tener que hacer algo aparte de tener el tablero digital prendido.

Los tableros digitales en el techo de los vehículos permiten que los taxistas tengan un ingreso adicional a las tarifas que reciben recogiendo pasajeros. Esta oportunidad facilita la comunicación entre negocios y el público por que los tableros digitales exponen programas locales y les da publicidad a negocios. La ciudad de Los Ángeles debe facilitar el proceso de compañías innovadoras para que se incorporen a la actividad comercial de la ciudad en vez de hacer el proceso más difícil.

La mayoría de los taxistas en Los Ángeles, muchos quien son inmigrantes, son parte de la industria que está enfrentando una baja en negocio que afecta sus ingresos financieros. La competencia entre taxistas y compañías de viajes compartidos ha resultado estos conductores enfrenten tiempos difíciles para mantenerse en la industria.

Hoy, los taxistas no ganan lo suficiente en un día para cubrir el costo de la gasolina u otros gastos de mantenimiento del vehículo. Esto significa que los conductores que ya trabajan largas horas se encuentran bajo presión de manejar tiempo extra para mantener sus ganancias. Lo que antes era un negocio floreciente es ahora una lucha diaria por sobrevivir.

Como presidente de la asociación de negocios latinos, yo he visto de primera mano cómo este problema afecta a las comunidades locales, especialmente a las comunidades de bajos ingresos, quienes resultan las más perjudicadas.

Recientemente Ingrese a la compañía de inicio Firefly, que combina su tecnología de pantalla inteligente –LED-, con los vehículos existentes para mostrar anuncios “conscientes de la situación” a los peatones en áreas ocupadas. La tecnología avanzada de las pantallas puede hacer que el vehículo sea un punto de acceso de WiFi gratuito para un pasajero, una innovación que puede ayudar a los taxistas a competir en la industria y mantenerse en sus vida.

Esta tecnología de pantalla inteligente también ofrece otra oportunidad de publicidad para las empresas locales y pequeñas que a menudo se ven excluidas de otras plataformas por competidores más grandes. Las empresas pueden optar por geo-cercar los anuncios, beneficiando a las empresas

latinas, en particular, quienes pueden ampliar su alcance a través de anuncios bilingües basados en la ubicación.

Además, la compañía otorga al menos 10% del inventario de publicidad total a organizaciones comunitarias e iniciativas del gobierno local sin costo. En Los Ángeles, Firefly ayudará a promocionar las Alertas Ámber, anulando todas las pantallas en la área cuando una nueva alerta esté activa, y publicará anuncios gratuitos para grupos que van desde la Coalición para un Aire Limpio hasta Personas que Asisten a las Personas sin Hogar, y a la Liga de Protección de la Policía de Los Angeles.

Los conductores de servicios de viaje compartidos como Uber y Lyft ya están usando estas pantallas digitales móviles, dándoles a sus conductores la oportunidad de aumentar sus ingresos. Los taxistas no deben ser tratados de manera diferente. Sin embargo, algunos funcionarios de la Ciudad están tratando de evitar que los taxistas utilicen esta tecnología. Este es un esfuerzo equivocado que perjudicará a los conductores y pondrá obstáculos a la innovación.

Firefly es el tipo de negocio innovador que ayuda a hacer Los Ángeles una ciudad mejor. Yo apoyo el uso expandido de esta tecnología en la Ciudad de Los Ángeles y en otras ciudades.

*Rubén Guerra es presidente y director general de la Asociación de Negocios Latinos que representa a más de 800 mil empresas latinas en California.*

**Link:** <https://laopinion.com/2019/03/21/avances-en-la-tecnologia-ayudaran-a-los-taxistas-a-sobrevivir/>

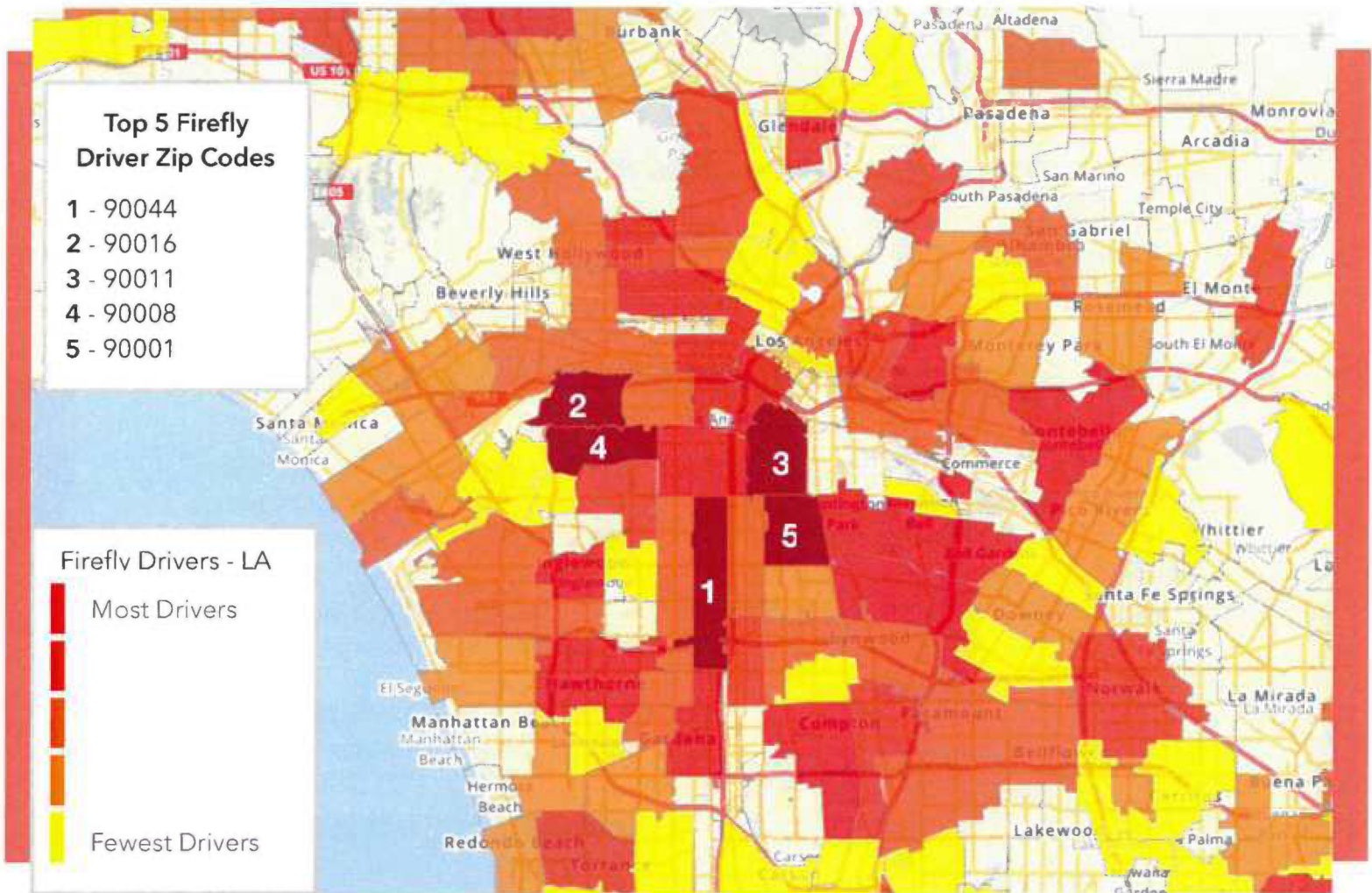


# FIREFLY

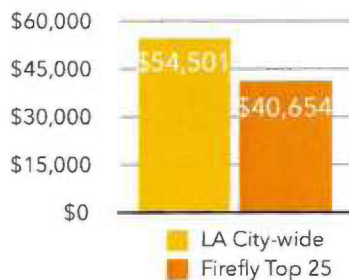
## WHAT NEIGHBORHOODS ARE RECEIVING THE ADDITIONAL DRIVER INCOME FROM FIREFLY?

Not only does the supplemental income drivers earn from partnering with Firefly go directly to them and not the rideshare companies, the money is going to economically disadvantaged communities in Los Angeles.

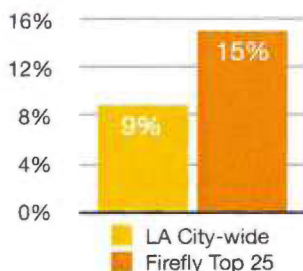
This map shows the 25 top zip codes where active and wait listed drivers reside.



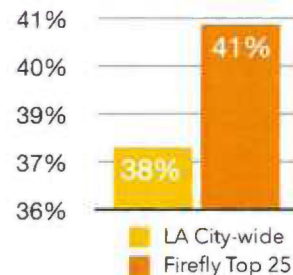
25% Lower  
Median Income



60% Higher  
African American  
Population



Higher Foreign-  
Born Population





# FIREFLY



## FIREFLY: BOOSTING DRIVER INCOMES IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Driving for a living is a tough business. Firefly is proud to help drivers earn more without demanding more of their time away from their families or on the road for longer hours when they're already tired.

### Helping Taxi Drivers Survive Disruption

A UCLA study, "Driving Poor: Taxi Drivers and the Regulation of the Taxi Industry in Los Angeles" found LA taxi drivers face harsh conditions...



Averaged 72 hours per week driving



...to earn just \$8.39 per hour



Over 43% of miles with no passenger or fares being collected.

...and there's more disruption on the way that threaten the industry's survival entirely:



Taxi trips have declined by 30% since 2012 when TNCs arrived.



LAX construction will move taxis out to a waiting lot, losing a key advantage over TNCs.

Firefly Smart Screens help taxi drivers **innovate to compete** in an increasingly difficult market for transportation.



Up to 20% more income without additional hours or miles of driving.



Free Wi-Fi for Passengers to help the taxi industry improve services for riders.



# FIREFLY



## About Firefly

Firefly is a smart city communications platform for engaging the urban population.

We deploy digital smart screen and smart city sensor devices on top of the existing fleet of taxi and ridesharing vehicles. Our connected screens show out-of-home ads while generating data for cities to better inform critical policy and service decisions, at no additional cost to cities.

Firefly works directly with taxi drivers and rideshare drivers to provide a monthly income boost of approximately 20% on top of their primary income from transporting passengers. We are a California company and to date we have paid over \$600,000 directly to Los Angeles drivers.

Firefly is not adding new vehicles to the road. We work with proven full-time drivers and do not incentivize based on drive time.



In addition to supporting drivers, we dedicate a minimum of 10% of our total inventory to community organizations, nonprofits, and social causes through our City Partner program.

## How Our Smart Screens Work

- **Not Parked Billboards:** Our screens do not run ads when the car is parked and turned off.
- **Innovative Technology:** Our screens are LED, WiFi-enabled, and equipped with GPS.
- **Safely Installed:** Our devices are safely attached to the vehicle by local Firefly technicians using top of the line Thule brand roof racks.
- **Community-Appropriate Ads:** Firefly voluntarily takes steps to be a good neighbor:
  - We geofence in areas as requested by city authorities and are consistent with local regulations.
  - We do not display ads for tobacco products, cannabis, or adult entertainment clubs.
- **Safe in the Elements:** Our devices have passed extensive crash safety and durability tests by an independent licensed engineering firm to ensure they meet military safety standards.



# FIREFLY

## Smart City Platform

- Because our screens are connected to WiFi, GPS, and provide a power source through the vehicle's battery, they offer near limitless opportunities for Smart City applications.
- GPS-data from the smart screens alone can be used to provide vehicle speeds, traffic conditions, and common routes taken by the vehicles.
- Combined with an accelerometer, we can detect potholes and map harsh braking incidents that would indicate unsafe areas to help cities respond faster to infrastructure needs.
- Future device models will provide free WiFi to passengers and monitor air quality.

## Los Angeles City Partners Program

- In every city where we operate, we launch our City Partners Program, a combination of donated ad space to local public agencies and important nonprofit organizations, as well as sharing data and piloting new and innovative smart city sensor initiatives. This platform is provided at no cost to the city agencies and nonprofits.
- In Los Angeles, we are proud to partner by:
  - Helping communicate **Amber Alerts** on all of our Smart Screens whenever there is an active Amber Alert. When notified of a new alert, we override every screen in the area.
  - Providing the **Los Angeles Police Protective League (LAPPL)** with free ad space to recruit new police officers from minority communities through targeted ads.
  - Helping the **Coalition for Clean Air** spread the word about California Clean Air Day, and encouraging people to use shared rides instead of taking solo trips in ridesharing vehicles.
  - Supporting **People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)** with an extensive ad campaign in targeted zip codes where PATH seeks to communicate with homeless camps and individuals to make them aware of available resources.
  - Providing the **Ad Council** with space to promote their Smokey the Bear message to prevent forest fires in Los Angeles and surrounding communities.
  - Partnering with the **Jewish Center for Justice** on a voter registration campaign.
  - Working with the **Mayor's Census 2020** team on a 5-month census participation and awareness ad campaign that targets non-English speaking communities using tailored messages in neighborhood-specific languages.





**LOS ANGELES AREA**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

March 27, 2019

Councilmember Mike Bonin  
City Of Los Angeles  
200 N Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**SUBJECT: Letter of opposition to Motion No. 19-0104 (Blumenfield – Harris-Dawson)**

Dear Councilmember Bonin,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, I am writing opposition to the proposed motion to ban digital rooftop advertising for taxi and rideshare drivers.

Rideshare drivers in our community have partnered with Firefly to earn additional income each month without the need to work longer hours through displaying dynamic advertisements on Firefly's digital rooftop technology during working hours. Currently this stream of supplemental income is unavailable to taxicab drivers despite the similar nature of their work. A partnership with a technology company like Firefly could help supplement their income without the need to work additional hours.

Digital rooftop advertising is an innovative technology that is driving the future of communications. Through the technology, businesses are able to reach a diverse population at a higher frequency. Firefly provides greater opportunity for businesses in LA to advertise throughout the region and generate brand awareness. It also provides a minimum of 10 percent of its advertising space for nonprofits and community groups to share valuable resources and information. Firefly is committed to restrictions on advertisements that display tobacco products, cannabis, or adult entertainment clubs.

By pursuing a ban on digital rooftop advertising, the City would reduce the income-levels of those already in partnerships with Firefly, and diminish the future of this innovative communication technology.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose this motion; we appreciate your consideration.. Please contact Public Policy Manager, Kendal Asuncion, with any questions at [kasuncion@lachamber.com](mailto:kasuncion@lachamber.com) or 213-580-7518.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Duboff".

Jessica Duboff  
Vice President, Public Policy




CC:

Councilmember Paul Koretz

Councilmember Nury Martinez

Councilmember Herb Wesson







March 26, 2019

The Honorable Mike Bonin  
Chair, Transportation Committee  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Subject: Council File 19-0104 Repeal of Taxicab Board Rule 415(c) - OPPOSE**

Dear Councilmember Bonin,

On behalf of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) and more than 400 businesses in the San Fernando Valley and throughout Los Angeles, we are writing to oppose placing a ban on digital rooftop advertising on vehicles.

Mayor Garcetti and the Los Angeles City Council have made a coordinated and focused effort to encourage and welcome new innovations and technologies to our city, as they bring jobs and spur economic growth. Digital rooftop advertising contributes to this commitment by connecting businesses with consumers through the use of innovative technology.

This type of advertising offers local businesses an innovative model of promoting their product or services to consumers throughout Los Angeles. Small scale digital advertising allows small businesses to reach a very diverse audience in neighborhoods that are typically hard to reach while remaining in their budget.

A number of businesses in our region are advertising or have expressed interest in this type of advertising to generate brand awareness and loyalty. This type of digital advertising allows screen time for community-focused public service announcements; nonprofit messaging and promotion; as well as for city agencies to share resource information, Amber Alerts or messages during a time of crisis.

The proposed ban on digital rooftop advertising will negatively impact communities benefitting from the increased economic activity generated by consumers who have supported local businesses.

Los Angeles has a long tradition of allowing new and innovative technologies to flourish while developing sensible regulations that ensure the public's safety. We urge you to enact a sensible policy that ensures public safety and ensures businesses thrive using the advancement of technology arriving to the city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Gritzner'.

Lisa Gritzner  
VICA Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Waldman'.

Stuart Waldman  
VICA President



## McCarty Memorial Christian Church

4101 West Adams Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90018  
Church Telephone (323) 731-4131 - Fax (323) 731-5192  
Email: [mccartylovesyou@yahoo.com](mailto:mccartylovesyou@yahoo.com)

March 26, 2019

Councilmember Mike Bonin  
Los Angeles City Council  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: McCarty Memorial Christian Church opposition to Councilmember  
Blumenfield's motion to ban digital rooftop advertising**

Dear Councilmember Bonin,

McCarty Memorial Christian Church having worked with Firefly and witnessed the positive impact they have on the cities in which they operate, we are expressing our concern for Councilmember Blumenfield's proposed motion that would essentially ban digital rooftop advertising on rideshare and taxi cab vehicles. Many nonprofits, such as ourselves, rely on this free resource and the benefits and exposure it provides for us.

Firefly reserves 10 percent of all ad space for local nonprofits and community groups, free of charge. This resource helps us achieve our mission, at no cost to our organization. Whether we use this screen-time to increase awareness of our organization or the issues we work to address, our partnership with Firefly helps our cause immensely.

This innovative way to reach our community has allowed our organization to remind our neighbors that we all deserve a place to belong and that we must love and support one another regardless of housing situation. People in search of resources are able to receive much-needed information as our message is shared directly throughout the city. Councilmember Blumenfield's proposed motion would cut off this avenue of opportunity for many nonprofit organizations just like us.

Please protect Firefly's ability to continue to operate in Los Angeles. Your support of digital rooftop advertising also means support for our organization.

Sincerely,

Rev. Edward L. Anderson M.A., M.Div.



Senior Pastor , McCarty Memorial Christian Church

**Cc:**

Councilmember Paul Koretz

Councilmember Nury Martinez

Councilmember Herb Wesson

Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

March 18, 2019

Barbara Cole  
2281 W. William St.  
Long Beach, Ca 90810

Dear Transportation Committee Members,

I strongly urge the Committee to oppose the ban on Firefly that is being proposed by Councilmember Blumenfield. In my personal experience, signing up for Firefly has had a positive impact on my life because it helps me financially. The extra income that I receive from having the Firefly sign on my car allows me to pay my car note. Many other drivers are like me and depend on the extra money Firefly provides to help with expenses.

The extra \$300 a month that Firefly provides me and other drivers may not seem like anything to some people, but for those of us who are independent and trying to make it, it makes a big difference. I recommend Firefly to many drivers, and hope to continue.

Please support the drivers in your community who are only trying to make a living and oppose the ban on Firefly.

With thanks,

Barbara Cole

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Barbara Cole", written in dark ink.

Jaime Robert Suarez Mejia  
1303 West I St. Apt. 2,  
Ontario CA, 91762

March 15, 2019

Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Transportation Committee Members,

I am writing to you today to voice my disagreement on the proposed motion by Councilmember Blumenfield to ban rooftop digital advertisements. The arguments being made by the Councilmember are not warranted as many of my passengers only have positive sentiments about the digital ads as they spark interactions and help other businesses with their marketing plans to reach a very diverse demographic as I drive throughout the City of Los Angeles.

Working for rideshare companies is how I make a living and being able to sign up for Firefly and work with them as well allows me to have an additional income without having to do anything other than turn the ad on while I work. The extra income helps me pay for my car, and without my car I would lose the income that I currently make.

I ask the Transportation Committee to support individuals like me who are just trying to earn a living.

Thank you,

Jaime Robert Suarez Mejia  
(Jaimeaccent01@gmail.com)



L.A. City Council Transportation Committee  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

March 16, 2019

Transportation Committee Members,

I am opposed to the proposed ban on rooftop digital rooftop advertisements that the City is considering. As a rideshare driver with a Firefly sign on my vehicle, I feel it would be an injustice to myself and other drivers who are earning a supplemental income without having to work more hours.

The ads that run on my sign are good messages that highlight issues such as safe driving, homelessness, and help to promote local businesses. I haven't received any complaints from passengers that I pick-up. In fact, my sign sparks curiosity and conversation about what it is and even how they too can sign-up.

An extra \$300 may not seem like a lot of money to some, but it helps me cover my car payment each month. Please do not ban Firefly.

Thank you,

Patricia Carlblom

12828 Mountain Rd.  
Piñon Hills, CA 92372

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Carlblom". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first name "Patricia" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Carlblom".

March 15, 2019

Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Transportation Committee Members:

As a resident of Los Angeles County and a rideshare driver, I strongly urge the Committee to support taxi and rideshare drivers and oppose the ban on mobile digital rooftop advertisements and Firefly.

I am constantly picking up passengers from the Los Angeles airport and all I hear are positive feedback on the rooftop ads as it highlights both local businesses and nonprofits to visitors. I am always recommending Firefly to other drivers because it allows us the opportunity to have an extra source of income, which is particularly helpful as the cost of living continues to increase in the LA County. That extra income goes towards bills without me having to get another job.

Please support the drivers in your community and oppose the ban on mobile digital rooftop advertisements and Firefly.

Thank you,

Kevin English

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin English', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.



L.A. City Council Transportation Committee  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

March 15, 2019

Dear Transportation Committee Members,

As a parent, I have to take care of my family and make sure that there is food on the table and that the bills are paid. With the extra \$300 I make from Firefly, I am able to provide for my family which gives me much pride.

Firefly connects technology and the rideshare industry together to create new ways for consumers to gain access to advertisements. Through the use of their signs, businesses are able to be communicate and reach a larger audience. During times of emergency, these billboards have the power to inform our city about critical messages.

As a rideshare driver, I am able to have the flexibility to work when I need to. With Firefly, I am able to earn a guaranteed amount of money each month for no additional hours that allows me to be able to spend time with my kids.

The bottom line is why would you ban something that benefits the community? These signs do not pose a threat to the community as they actually help individuals earn a supplemental income and help provide for their families.

I urge the Transportation Committee to oppose the proposed motion to ban Firefly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Abdellatif', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Ben Abdellatif  
2000 N Ventura Rd.  
Oxnard, CA 93036

L.A. City Council Transportation Committee  
L.A. City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

March 18, 2019

Simon Xiong  
866 N. Bunker Hill Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

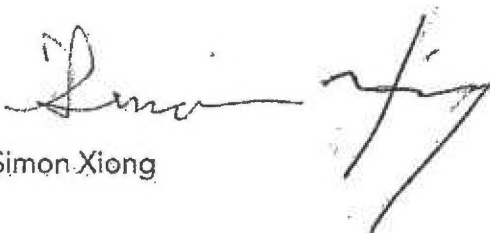
Honorable Transportation Committee Members:

I am currently a rideshare driver for Uber and Lyft, and I also partner with Firefly to carry their device on my car. Signing-up for Firefly has helped me tremendously as it helps alleviate the cost of living in the City of Los Angeles.

Firefly allows me to continue to be a rideshare driver and focus on my own career without the burden of having to get another job or driver longer hours to make ends meet. Banning Firefly and removing this extra income opportunity will only make it harder for me economically.

The \$300 I earn each month from Firefly is the supplemental income that I need in order to continue being able afford to live in the city and compete in the crowded rideshare driver market. Please consider this when making any future decisions on the matter.

Thank you;

  
Simon Xiong

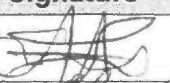
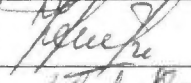

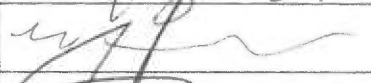

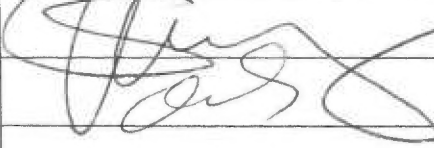



## **\*\*PETITION\*\***

### **TAXI DRIVERS: REJECT BLUMENFIELD PROPOSAL TO BAN DIGITAL TAXICAB ROOFTOP ADVERTISING DEVICES**

In January of this year, Councilmember Blumenfield filed a motion that attacks our ability to earn a living income as taxi drivers by banning the decades old right to display rooftop advertising on our taxis. The motion specifically targets a new digital rooftop advertising displays that offer us a much needed boost in income, \$300 per month, as well as the ability to offer improved services like free Wifi at not additional cost to us drivers.

Taxi top advertising has nothing to do with the street billboard trucks and parked billboards that were outlawed. The City regulations that Councilmember Blumenfield claims are the reason for banning all rooftop ads on taxis have nothing to do with taxis, and do not apply to us as our primary purpose will never be advertising. The only impact that digital taxi rooftop advertising would have on the City is that it would boost the income of taxi drivers like us without raising fares on our riders.

**We, the undersigned,** urge the City Council to reject the Blumenfield motion to repeal our right to earn money with rooftop advertising.

Full Name	Taxi Company	Email	Phone	Signature
ZEROM	ITOA	-	523 496 2298	
Tigran Narachyan	ITOA	tigrannarashyan@gmail.com	524 441	
Mahfuz Chowdhury	ITOA	MahfuzC70@gmail.com	818-913-8367	
Eduard Aspinos	ITOA		323 336 0308	
Vladimir Sorn	ITOA		818 484-0816	
Ashot Ohanjanyan	ITOA		(747) 232-1922	

## **\*\*PETITION\*\***

### **TAXI DRIVERS: REJECT BLUMENFIELD PROPOSAL TO BAN DIGITAL TAXICAB ROOFTOP ADVERTISING DEVICES**

In January of this year, Councilmember Blumenfield filed a motion that attacks our ability to earn a living income as taxi drivers by banning the decades old right to display rooftop advertising on our taxis. The motion specifically targets a new digital rooftop advertising displays that offer us a much needed boost in income, \$300 per month, as well as the ability to offer improved services like free Wifi at not additional cost to us drivers.

Taxi top advertising has nothing to do with the street billboard trucks and parked billboards that were outlawed. The City regulations that Councilmember Blumenfield claims are the reason for banning all rooftop ads on taxis have nothing to do with taxis, and do not apply to us as our primary purpose will never be advertising. The only impact that digital taxi rooftop advertising would have on the City is that it would boost the income of taxi drivers like us without raising fares on our riders.

**We, the undersigned,** urge the City Council to reject the Blumenfield motion to repeal our right to earn money with rooftop advertising.

Full Name	Taxi Company	Email	Phone	Signature
ARTUR ANTONIAN	ITOA	47754K077100	323-247222	[Signature]
Okopnik, Edward	ITOA		(323)8914195	[Signature]
ARTUR Sirgh	ITOA	818 458 0991	1014	[Signature]
Sergey Asinyan	ITOA	818 472 0002	1053	[Signature]
OMAN	ITOA	KNECm 1002614	1149	[Signature]
Minosyan	ITOA	818 653 5653	1184	[Signature]
ARMIEL	ITOA	(323)810-74-33	1133	[Signature]
ANDRE NORANIAN	ITOA	(818)419-1919	1085	[Signature]



## **\*\*PETITION\*\***

### **TAXI DRIVERS: REJECT BLUMENFIELD PROPOSAL TO BAN DIGITAL TAXICAB ROOFTOP ADVERTISING DEVICES**

In January of this year, Councilmember Blumenfield filed a motion that attacks our ability to earn a living income as taxi drivers by banning the decades old right to display rooftop advertising on our taxis. The motion specifically targets a new digital rooftop advertising displays that offer us a much needed boost in income, \$300 per month, as well as the ability to offer improved services like free Wifi at not additional cost to us drivers.

Taxi top advertising has nothing to do with the street billboard trucks and parked billboards that were outlawed. The City regulations that Councilmember Blumenfield claims are the reason for banning all rooftop ads on taxis have nothing to do with taxis, and do not apply to us as our primary purpose will never be advertising. The only impact that digital taxi rooftop advertising would have on the City is that it would boost the income of taxi drivers like us without raising fares on our riders.

**We, the undersigned,** urge the City Council to reject the Blumenfield motion to repeal our right to earn money with rooftop advertising.

Full Name	Taxi Company	Email	Phone	Signature
LYUDMILA @ RANASTYAN	ITOA		818/521-97-33	[Signature]
ZHANA	ITOA		818 6955444	[Signature]
IZABELA	ITOA		818 7484226	[Signature]
AYIK KARABAKHTSYAN	ITOA		818 3196438	[Signature]
ARMEN HARLEYUNYAN	ITOA		818 281-45-54	[Signature]
DAVID MUKHTARYAN	ITOA		818 642-4464	[Signature]
Hovhannes Simonyan	ITOA		213 3999949	[Signature]
Andriozyan Samuel	ITOA		818 3903133	[Signature]
Silbert Abelian	ITOA		818-445-4240	[Signature]

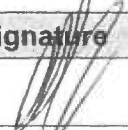

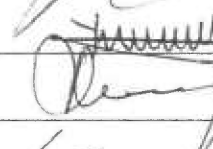
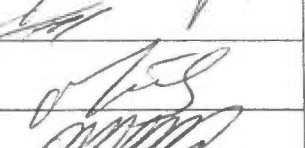


## **\*\*PETITION\*\***

### **TAXI DRIVERS: REJECT BLUMENFIELD PROPOSAL TO BAN DIGITAL TAXICAB ROOFTOP ADVERTISING DEVICES**

In January of this year, Councilmember Blumenfield filed a motion that attacks our ability to earn a living income as taxi drivers by banning the decades old right to display rooftop advertising on our taxis. The motion specifically targets a new digital rooftop advertising displays that offer us a much needed boost in income, \$300 per month, as well as the ability to offer improved services like free Wifi at not additional cost to us drivers.

Taxi top advertising has nothing to do with the street billboard trucks and parked billboards that were outlawed. The City regulations that Councilmember Blumenfield claims are the reason for banning all rooftop ads on taxis have nothing to do with taxis, and do not apply to us as our primary purpose will never be advertising. The only impact that digital taxi rooftop advertising would have on the City is that it would boost the income of taxi drivers like us without raising fares on our riders.

**We, the undersigned,** urge the City Council to reject the Blumenfield motion to repeal our right to earn money with rooftop advertising.

Full Name	Taxi Company	Email	Phone	Signature
Mikhail Sker	ITOA		323-356-4643	
Nagreb, Magid	T.TOA		323-350-3020	
Shel Fina	ITOA		910 666-8121	
YEMANE GEBREKIRSTOS	ITOA		323-304-7122	
BORIS Koushikovsky	ITOA		(213) 804-2418	
A. Perdikian	ITOA		323/350-2585	
GHAGIK MARGARYAN	ITOA		(747) 272-5115	
Artur Ghazaryan	ITOA		(818) 281-8861	
George Beghos	ITOA		818-738-8345	



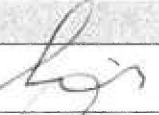





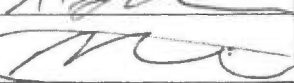


## \*\*PETITION\*\*

### TAXI DRIVERS: REJECT BLUMENFIELD PROPOSAL TO BAN DIGITAL TAXICAB ROOFTOP ADVERTISING DEVICES

In January of this year, Councilmember Blumenfield filed a motion that attacks our ability to earn a living income as taxi drivers by banning the decades old right to display rooftop advertising on our taxis. The motion specifically targets a new digital rooftop advertising displays that offer us a much needed boost in income, \$300 per month, as well as the ability to offer improved services like free Wifi at not additional cost to us drivers.

Taxi top advertising has nothing to do with the street billboard trucks and parked billboards that were outlawed. The City regulations that Councilmember Blumenfield claims are the reason for banning all rooftop ads on taxis have nothing to do with taxis, and do not apply to us as our primary purpose will never be advertising. The only impact that digital taxi rooftop advertising would have on the City is that it would boost the income of taxi drivers like us without raising fares on our riders.

**We, the undersigned,** urge the City Council to reject the Blumenfield motion to repeal our right to earn money with rooftop advertising.

Full Name	Taxi Company	Email	Phone	Signature
ROBERT ALEKSANDROV	ITOA		(818) 515 0980	
ANT ALEKSANDROV	ITOA		(818) 331-6633	
PANU GHOSH	ITOA		818 7364837	
FARAH VAN VREKEN	ITOA		(818)-312-0597	
ABRARAT ZADGORIAN	ITOA		(818) 731 2222	
Leon Sclanovsky	ITOA	leon@taxi4u.com	2B/804 7271	
LEON SCLANOVIC	ITOA	LYOSAKI@gmail.com	323-821-7660	
ASMEROMI/MARIAM	ITOA	ASMEROM60544@YAHOO.COM	(323) 347-9992	
Andrey Mnosyan	ITOA		(818) 434-7743	

## TAXI DRIVERS: REJECT BLUMENFELD PROPOSAL TO BAN DIGITAL TAXICAB ROOFTOP ADVERTISING DEVICES

Taxi top advertising has nothing to do with the street billboard trucks and parked billboards that were outlawed. The City regulations that Councilmember Blumenfield claims are the reason for banning all rooftop ads on taxis have nothing to do with taxis, and do not apply to us as our primary purpose will never be advertising. The only impact that digital taxi rooftop advertising would have on the City is that it would boost the income of taxi drivers like us without raising fares on our riders.

[illegible]



## TAXI DRIVERS: REJECT BLUMENFELD PROPOSAL TO BAN DIGITAL TAXICAB ROOFTOP ADVERTISING DEVICES

Taxi top advertising has nothing to do with the street billboard trucks and parked billboards that were outlawed. The City regulations that Councilmember Blumenfield claims are the reason for banning all rooftop ads on taxis have nothing to do with taxis, and do not apply to us as our primary purpose will never be advertising. The only impact that digital taxi rooftop advertising would have on the City is that it would boost the income of taxi drivers like us without raising fares on our riders.

[illegible]

**\*\*PETITION\*\***

## TAXI DRIVERS: REJECT BLUMENFIELD PROPOSAL TO BAN DIGITAL TAXICAB ROOFTOP ADVERTISING DEVICES

**In January of this year**, Councilmember Blumenfield filed a motion that attacks our ability to earn a living income as taxi drivers by banning the decades old right to display rooftop advertising on our taxis. The motion specifically targets a new digital rooftop advertising displays that offer us a much needed boost in income, \$300 per month, as well as the ability to offer improved services like free Wifi at not additional cost to us drivers.

Taxi top advertising has nothing to do with the street billboard trucks and parked billboards that were outlawed. The City regulations that Councilmember Blumenfield claims are the reason for banning all rooftop ads on taxis have nothing to do with taxis, and do not apply to us as our primary purpose will never be advertising. The only impact that digital taxi rooftop advertising would have on the City is that it would boost the income of taxi drivers like us without raising fares on our riders.

**We, the undersigned,** urge the City Council to reject the Blumenfield motion to repeal our right to earn money with rooftop advertising.

[illegible]