

March 8th, 2015 (Deferred from the March 26, 2015 Board Meeting)

To the Chair and Members of the Toronto Transit Commission.

Re: Commissioner De Baeremaeker's motion that was carried in Meeting No. 1976, on August 19th, 2014, with regard to the rate paid by Wheeltrans to the operators of the Accessible Taxi Service Contract.

Dear Chair and Members,

My name is Hillel Gudes, and I am a wheelchair accessible taxi operator in the City of Toronto, performing work of servicing people with disability on behalf of Wheeltrans.

At the above mentioned Board meeting Commissioner De Baeremaeker moved the following Motion: **"That TTC amend the Accessible Taxi Service Contract to add HST to the minimum driver rate"**. The Motion carried.

For the benefit of the new Board Members, the following is the background for what led to this Motion:

TTC, through its Wheeltrans Division, has been contracting out a portion of its service to the disabled community in Toronto to several Taxi Brokerages. These Taxi Brokerages, in turn, engage sub-contractors (the "Operators") to actually service the Wheeltrans customers.

At the beginning of October, 2013 TTC published a Request for Bid (RFB) for a new contract that was to replace the old contract that was about to expire at the end of June, 2014. One aspect of the RFB dealt with the compensation to be paid to the Operators. While payment to the Operators was made by the Taxi Brokerages who eventually won the contract, TTC set the guidelines, conditions, and limitations to the amount of that compensation.

On October 8th, 2013 TTC made the RFB (the "Original RFB") available to potential bidders. The Original RFB set the parameters for the compensation for the Operators as follows: the Taxi Brokerages would pay their respective Operators a minimum of \$2.50 per service kilometer, **exclusive** of H.S.T. (**\$2.50 + \$0.32 = \$2.82**).

On October 30th, 2013, a mere 8 days before the Closing Date for the Original RFB, TTC published an amendment to the Original RFB (the "Amended RFB"). The payment structure in the Amended RFB was identical to that in the Original RFB, with only one major fundamental difference: wherever the term **"exclusive of H.S.T."** appeared, it was replaced with the term **"inclusive of H.S.T."** That meant that the winning Taxi Brokerages would have to pay their respective Operators a minimum of \$2.50 per service kilometer, **inclusive** of H.S.T. (**\$2.21 + 0.29 = \$2.50**).

The end result of this “little” amendment was that when comparing the Original RFB to the Amended RFB, the compensation to the Operators became lower by \$0.32 per service kilometers as per the Amended RFB.

Suffice to say that the Amended RFB was not received well by the Operators, and on or about the date that the new contract (which was based on the Amended RFB) was about to start (which, I believe, was July 2nd, 2014 if I remember correctly), the Operators initiated a job action that lasted until July 23rd, 2014. The issue was dealt with at the Board’s meeting of July 23rd, 2014, and it was agreed to put it as an Agenda item for the August 19th, 2014 Board meeting. As a result of that the Operators called off the job action and went back to work on July 24th, 2014.

A large number of the Operators attended the August 19th, 2014 Board meeting, and some of them made compelling and passionate deputations. At the end of the discussion Councilor/Commissioner De Baeremaeker moved the Motion stated in the first Paragraph of this letter. The majority of the Board members, in their wisdom, supported it, and the Motion carried.

Subsequently, as it turned out, TTC implemented the Motion starting August 20th, 2014, the day after the Motion was passed, rather than implementing it retroactive to the date when the new contract started. The Operators were taken back by that fact, as I think everyone else that attended the Board meeting on August 19, 2014 understood that the intent of the Motion, as well as the intent of the Mover, was that the H.S.T. would be added to the drivers’ minimum rate retroactive to the date when the new contract started; everyone that is, except TTC Staff.

I am writing today to formally request that at the Board’s March 26th, 2015 meeting the Board consider my correspondence and the following motion: that H.S.T. will be added to the minimum driver rate in the current Accessible Taxi Service Contract for the period from the beginning of the current contract to August 19th, 2014.

Sincerely yours,

Hillel Gudes

March 23, 2015 (Deferred from the March 26, 2015 Board Meeting)

To chairperson,

Dear sir/Madame,

I am writing you regarding a very serious issue where TTC is trying to reverse the HST from our pay that was granted to us last year after a long and lengthy struggle to educate members of the council about the facts about the W/A income and expenses and role and responsibilities.

Dear sir/ Madame, the matter of facts are still the same. Our responsibilities and duties at minimum are the same if not increased. We have mounting expenses such as escalating insurance costs plus HST, higher costs of accessible vehicles (upwards of \$65k+HST), skyrocketing repair and upkeep costs plus HST and fuel costs HST included. THE physical and mental health costs directly arising from the service delivery on behalf of the CITY of Toronto and TTC are something we cannot put dollar value on it. TTC however, by bringing back these motions is only trying to wrong the corrected decision that was wrong to begin with. The only reason, we the W/A drivers are being targeted by big and mighty TTC is that we are weak and voiceless group of people who they think they can bully and force them to submission. We would like you and the mayor Tory and rest of the councillors to please help us avoid this wrong and help us fend of this bully.

Dear sir/Madame, to the big bad TTC is the matter of budgetary adjustments but to us it matter of life and death and what they are purposing will severely affect our lively hood and adversely affect our families. We humbly request you to please don't listen to the TTC's rubbish arguments and consider the humble submissions that I am making and we have made in the past. Please do not let a wrong to be committed against the citizens of this great city.

Thank you very much.

Your sincerely,
Muhammad Bhatti