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Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2015 10:05 PM
To: IRRC; dweldon@philapark.org; jney@philapark.org
Subject: Philadelphia Parking Authority's Proposed Rulemaking Order 126-11

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I support the Philadelphia Parking Authority's Proposed Rulemaking Order 126-11, which would require all vehicles proposed for taxicab service after a designated date to be wheelchair accessible, and for the first time, accessible for everyone in Philadelphia.

I support the proposed order as a matter of social justice and smart economics. As a person with a disability, I also have a personal stake in creating a more accessible world for everyone.

It is unjust to exclude any part of the population, or any people at all, from full participation in society and all that life has to offer. Making a transportation service available to some people but not all people is plain wrong. Everyone should have a right to safe, available transportation to go about their daily lives. With the current count of 7 (or 8) accessible taxis in the City of Philadelphia, taxis are not yet available to everyone. Taxis--accessible taxis--are not a luxury. This is a matter of allowing every person access to the safety and convenience of a mode of transport that most of us take for granted.

I am someone who has taken for granted my own access to taxis for many years. I have a mobility disability, but I walk with crutches and do not use a wheelchair. For most of my life, traveling by taxi has helped to relieve the fatigue I feel when traveling long distances. Taxis have made many of my commutes possible when they may not have otherwise been feasible, whether at 2:00 in the afternoon or at 2:00 in the morning.

In the last few years I have begun to make new friends and meet many new people who like me also have disabilities, many of whom use wheelchairs. My partner of 2 years uses a wheelchair. When we travel together through Philadelphia, taxis are no longer the convenient option they have been for me for many years. They are something that I am able to use freely but that my partner and friends cannot use. Wheelchair accessible taxis are accessible not only for people who use wheelchairs, they are able to be used by everyone. Universal design, making all taxis wheelchair accessible, is the only way to create a truly equitable system available to all.

A U.S. Department of Justice report (<http://www.ada.gov/busstat.htm>) states that "the large and growing market of people with disabilities has \$175 billion in discretionary spending, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. \$175 billion is more than four times the spending power of tweens (8-14 year-olds), a demographic sought after by businesses [...] diners with disabilities [...] spend \$35 billion in restaurants [...] more than 75% of people with disabilities eat out at restaurants at least once a week [...] spending by travelers with disabilities exceeds \$13.6 billion annually.

Let's harness the spending power of people with disabilities to make Philadelphia's economy stronger. I know that I would like to do more and spend more in Philadelphia, and I would like to live here for many more years, if only my friends, my partner, and I can get to where we want to go.

Thank you,

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