



## **Pennsylvania Transportation Alliance**

**Advocating for accessible and affordable transportation for individuals with disabilities**

**Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Commission (PA IRRC) –  
Follow up to February 21, 2019 Public comment on Wheel Chair  
Accessible Vehicles (WAV) on behalf of the Pennsylvania  
Transportation Alliance**

This is Jeff Iseman, the Public Policy and Outreach Coordinator from the Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council (PA SILC, [www.pasilc.org](http://www.pasilc.org)). PA SILC collaborates with the 17 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and others on various issue of importance to people with disabilities, including transportation. We are testifying today as a member of the **Pennsylvania Transportation Alliance**. This is an ad hoc organization that was instrumental in getting our state's persons with disabilities (PWD) Shared Ride Program which now covers 66 counties. The Alliance has been involved in other transportation issues, such as supporting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades to Amtrak and other rail stations, Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) and efforts to improve disability access to Transportation Networking Companies (TNCs- Uber, Lyft, Yellow Z in PA currently), including Act 164 of 2016. In Pennsylvania, we have also participated in the Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition (KTFC) and nationally, with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) on transportation issues for all modes and greater mobility options.

Rather than restate what other points that were presented by other testifiers, the PA Transportation Alliance agrees with points that were made about the challenges for persons with disabilities, particularly as related to Philadelphia. Some additional points related to Pennsylvanians statewide

with disabilities for members of the PA IRRC to consider regarding transportation and people with disabilities

- While Philadelphia has challenges on WAV, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and other Pennsylvania communities lack access to WAVs. The option of an accessible app for Uber or Lyft either does not appear or even if it shows up, a local option is not available. We have many rural areas where cell phone reception and rural broadband is limited which restricts some modern transportation options.
- Even before TNCs, most communities lack accessible taxi service. Even in some locations where it supposedly exists, an accessible cab may not be available when contact is made. The same is still true today. We need both accessible taxis and TNCs.
- In many communities in Pennsylvania, para-transit providers for PWD and Senior Shared Ride programs do not cross counties or operate on evenings, weekends and holidays. Even in some communities where para-transit providers cross counties lines, the hours are limited.
- The lack of accessible transportation for people with disabilities adversely impacts access to healthcare, employment and community life in general.
  - Healthcare- Lack of transportation forces individuals to go the emergency room instead of a less costly option for care needs, such as primary or urgent care. This is not improving healthcare, it takes longer and is a more expensive option. Ambulances were noted by other WAV commenters. Potentially, these are taken out of circulation for less intensive needs. This is also not a community friendly option. How many people would unnecessarily choose to be transported in an ambulance back home?
  - Employment – Pennsylvania has made strides in employment for people with disabilities and the state as a whole. But many areas, particularly rural communities, lack transportation options. 23 counties in Pennsylvania have no mass transit. Para-transit is limited. Many people with disabilities and those who support them often do

not own vehicles. In today's world, employers expect perspective employees to be available for various shifts and to travel for work as needed.

- Community Life- People with disabilities desire the same opportunities as society in general. Live, play, volunteer and worship in our communities. If you can't get there, this doesn't happen.

• While we live in an ever changing world and much has improved, including in transportation, our state and nation is still well behind where many thought we would be after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities in 1990. Consider the following:

- Many vehicle lifts do not accommodate power wheelchairs for larger individuals

- Train stations and trains are often not up to ADA standards

- Mass transit drivers do not consistently call out the stops, perspective passenger get passed by and stations are sometimes not large enough to accommodate a person in a wheelchair or scooter, particularly important during in-climate weather.

- Taxis and TNCs- people with disabilities get passed by, even after requesting service according to designated procedures (phone, app, etc.), service animals have been placed in vehicle trunks and price gouging (over charging) and disability discrimination.

- Para-transit providers in Pennsylvania and elsewhere are using and subcontracting with TNCs. Our hope is that para-transit providers will utilize WAVs here that can help to improve and increase services in addressing the ongoing challenges of cross county lines, operating on additional hours (early mornings, evenings, weekends, holidays) and improving the timeliness of transportation.

- Timeliness or lack thereof, is an issue that we hear about frequently. Normal trips for para-transit users often take several hours or take up an entire where other transportation options only take up a third or

half of the travel time. There are many instances of no shows for drop-offs, pick-ups and scheduling challenges which make it more difficult for people with disabilities to maximize time effectively.

Thank you for holding this public hearing on WAVs. We look forward to future opportunities for comment. For more information, you may contact PA Transportation Alliance (below) or PA SILC ([JLlseman@pasilc.org](mailto:JLlseman@pasilc.org) or 717-364-1732x).

**5836 Penn Avenue Suite 405  
Cell 412-952-5402**

**Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
email [jtaguejr@aol.com](mailto:jtaguejr@aol.com)**