

2

Date: 10/7/15
Submitted in TCA Committee
Council File No: 15-0899-S1
Item No.: 2
Deputy: public

Robert Acherman
6055 W 75th Place
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310) 927-2127

October 5, 2015

Re: Council File 15-0899-S1, Transportation Network Companies (TNC) permits

Honorable City Council Members
Trade, Commerce and Technology Committee
City of Los Angeles
200 N Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear TCT Committee Members:

I am writing this letter as private citizen in support of ARSAC's CEQA appeal for TNC's. I am not able to attend the meeting in person as I had planned, so I am having this letter delivered to you on the day of the hearing.

I was born and raised in the City of Los Angeles and lived in Westchester for 37 years. I have been actively involved in the Westchester/Playa del Rey community and on LAX issues for the past 20 years. I helped found the Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa and served as its first Airport Relations Committee Chairman. I am acutely aware of the impact of LAX operations, especially ground transportation, on the Westchester/Playa del Rey community.

Three issues remain paramount with regards to CEQA and TNC's:

1. Traffic. LAX traffic through Westchester/Playa del Rey residential areas is a constant issue, but could be resolved by pro-active efforts by LAWA to direct LAX traffic away from residential areas. The proposed Geo-Fence does not resolve the issue of TNC drivers lingering or even sleeping in residential neighborhoods. TNC drivers have said that passengers can get around the TNC apps by simply calling the driver on his cell phone. This is why LAWA should require all TNC vehicles to have the same type of transponders that LAWA requires of other ground transportation providers such as taxis and shuttle vans.

LAX traffic in the Central Terminal Area (CTA) is approaching gridlock conditions on a daily basis. I have been to LAX at least 6 times this year at different times of the day to witness the congestion. It is like every day is becoming like Thanksgiving Day at LAX. Allowing TNC's to pick-up as well as drop-off passengers in the CTA will only increase the gridlock, especially on the upper-level Departures where LAWA wants TNC's to do pick-ups. I am finding that the Departures level traffic is becoming worse than the Arrivals level which historically has been more congested.

LAWA has embarked upon a Landside Access Modernization Plan (LAMP) to reduce the number of commercial vehicles in the CTA. Why allow in TNC's to erase any benefit gained by removing some of the vehicles from the CTA? While LAWA has proposed to limit only 40 TNC vehicles per TNC company under the Non-Exclusive License Agreement, the LAWA Executive Director may raise that limit without any environmental studies, public hearings or any other standards. While LAWA may claim to be under their trip cap today, what about tomorrow? LAX passenger traffic has jumped up to where LAX has displaced Chicago O'Hare as the second busiest airport in the United States. There must be an EIR to study the TNC's before they are allowed to perform pick-ups at LAX.

2. Pollution. LAWA has become a leader in clean-fuel and alternative fuel for its own fleets, so why not require that of TNC's at LAX? While the TNC's may have set a model year of 2000 for their TNC operators, these vehicles will continue to age and then produce more pollution. An EIR can address mitigating this issue through vehicle age requirements and clean-fuel or alternative fuel.
3. Safety & Security. LAWA should require its own badging procedure for TNC drivers. This will provide for a fingerprint background check. LAWA should also lobby the Public Utilities Commission for this to be a requirement of TNC drivers. A fingerprint background check will be stronger in helping to assure that LAX passengers are protected from TNC drivers who have backgrounds that would disqualify them from serving the public as a driver for hire.

Finally, while not a part of CEQA, LAWA should insist that TNC companies do not engage in surge pricing for LAX pick-ups. If LAWA is going to allow TNC companies to operate at LAX after preparing and approving an EIR for TNC 's, then LAWA can and should prevent this predatory pricing practice from occurring. No one should be "taken for a ride" at LAX, especially high-value foreign visitors visiting Los Angeles for the first time who do not understand how TNC pricing functions.

Please uphold ARSAC's CEQA appeal and require an EIR be performed for TNC's.

Sincerely,
Robert Acherman
Past Chairman, Airport Relations Committee*
Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa del Rey

* Title for identification purposes only