



NEW YORK CITY TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

- [Home](#)
- [About TLC](#)
- [Taxi of Tomorrow](#)
- [TLC Rules and Local Laws](#)
- [Court Administration](#)
- [Passenger Information](#)
- [Licensing](#)
- [Safety & Emissions](#)
- [Industry Information](#)
- [Commission Meetings](#)
- TLC News**
 - [Proposed Rules](#)
 - [Newly-Passed Rules](#)
 - [TLC Regulatory Agenda - Fiscal Year 2011](#)
 - [Average Medallion Prices](#)
 - [Photo Gallery](#)
 - [Industry Notices](#)
 - [Press Releases](#)
 - [Public Notices](#)
 - [Informational Presentations](#)
 - [Testimony](#)
 - [Newsletters](#)
 - [Sign up for official e-mail updates, news and Industry Notices from the TLC](#)
- [Current Licensees](#)
- [Employment Opportunities](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Contact / Visit TLC](#)
- [TLC Site Map](#)

TLC NEWS | TESTIMONY

The TLC testified on the proposed executive budget for fiscal year 2004

Delivered May 22, 2003 Good afternoon, Chairman Liu, Chairman Weprin, and members of the City Council Transportation and Finance Committees. My name is Matthew Daus, the Commissioner/Chair of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to testify regarding the Proposed Executive Budget as it relates to the TLC.

Through its consistent innovation and commitment to maximum efficiencies of operation, the TLC continues to accomplish its goal of ensuring safe, comfortable and readily available travel for riders of taxicabs, for-hire vehicles, commuter vans and paratransit vehicles.

The TLC's operations will be conducted within an Expense Budget for Fiscal Year 2004 of \$24,067,413. This consists of \$18,242,724 for Personal Services (PS) and \$5,824,689 for Other Than Personal Services (OTPS).

Today I will report on a variety of operational issues and major initiatives being undertaken by the TLC. As you know, the State budget bill that was recently adopted by the Senate and the Assembly contained enabling legislation authorizing the City of New York to issue up to 900 additional taxicab medallions. This would increase the number of taxicabs authorized in the City of New York by up to 7.4%. This bill was supported by the City Council, which issued a home rule message. The bill is now law, thereby enabling the City Council to consider amendments to local law authorizing the TLC to sell additional medallions.

The Taxi and Limousine Commission has commenced the environmental review necessary to determine whether the issuance of additional medallions would have a significant impact upon the environment. To assist in this review, the TLC, after issuing and reviewing the responses to a Request for Proposals, has engaged the services of an environmental consultant, Urbitran Associates, Inc. On April 21, 2003, the TLC was designated lead agency to conduct this environmental review, and issued a positive declaration on May 2, 2003. The TLC indicated that it would be issuing a draft environmental impact statement that would consider the effect a medallion sale would have upon conditions such as traffic congestion and air quality. On the basis of this declaration, the consultant prepared a preliminary scope of work on May 9, 2003, and a scoping meeting and hearing will be conducted on June 9, 2003, at which time members of the public will be given the opportunity to review the proposed work plan for this environmental review, prior to the preparation of the Draft EIS by the consultant. This places us in line, from a timing standpoint, with a plan that would allow for the sale of additional medallions during Fiscal Year 2004.

I am pleased to report that even with the City's economic difficulties, the TLC continues to provide all of its core services, and has gone the extra step to enhance and improve upon those services. To respond to the expressed needs of its customers, the TLC on April 1 of this fiscal year crafted and set into motion a pilot program aptly titled EZLicense I and II. EZLicense I allows new taxicab driver license applicants to take a condensed, three-day (24-hour) training course, instead of the previously required 80-hour course. The course consists of three full-day modules in Rules and Regulations, Geography and Driver/Passenger Relations. Applicants must pass an English Proficiency Test and Final Examination. Taxicab driver applicants may save up to \$195 compared to the cost associated with the 80-hour program. To allow more flexibility in the process, this new program enables applicants to sit for the Final Examination at any time during the four-month life of the application. EZLicense I, based upon its first month of operation, has had great appeal, with nearly 500 applicants registering for the course. Through May 9, a total of 472 examinations were taken by students who had signed up for the 24-hour program.

In response to the many for-hire vehicle driver licensees who wished for an easier transition to the medallion taxicab industry, as well as others who wanted to become paratransit or commuter van drivers, the TLC designed EZLicense II. This simplifies the process by which currently licensed applicants may obtain a second classification of license. Through this program, the TLC will expedite requests for a second license while eliminating the need to file a new application, allowing licensees to discover new and easier pathways to the career of their choice. For the month of April, I am pleased to note that 174 applications were received under EZLicense II, with 162 of those being FHV drivers applying for a medallion taxicab operator's license.

We are encouraged by the potential of the EZLicense program to attract new and former drivers while maintaining the high licensing and safety standards that the TLC requires. The program is built to encourage potential applicants through a flexible program that acknowledges different levels of experience and study needs. We will monitor EZLicense closely to ensure that it achieves its goal of licensing qualified, professional drivers more expeditiously and efficiently.

To assist our current licensees in coping with insurance costs that continue to rise, in January 2003 the TLC conceived and implemented the Safe Driver Program, whereby TLC licensees with good driving records may qualify for up to a 15% reduction in their insurance rates over a two-year period. The TLC broke new ground in reaching agreement with two major medallion taxicab and for-hire vehicle insurance providers to provide incentives for TLC-certified drivers. This initiative, the first and only one of its kind in the country, has thus far assisted 660 drivers in lowering their insurance premiums, and promises to provide a far-reaching incentive for safe driving citywide.

On the enforcement front, the TLC continues to pursue its Operation Street Hail, designed to impede illegal street hail activity. This undercover operation achieves its primary goal of assuring passenger safety while having an ancillary benefit of relieving traffic congestion and providing a conduit for the general enforcement of laws pertaining to for-hire vehicle operation. For the Fiscal Year to date, TLC inspectors have issued 2,952 summonses under Operation Street Hail, which is 34.4% more than the number issued by the end of May of the previous Fiscal Year. In fact, we already have exceeded the Fiscal Year 2002 total by 365 summonses or 14%. The TLC will expand its focus on this initiative throughout the next Fiscal Year.

The TLC's Operation Refusal, a proven success in enforcing against service refusals committed by medallion taxicab drivers, has been further refined. In conjunction with the analysis provided by our Management Accountability and Productivity Program (M.A.P.P.), the TLC has been able to fine-tune Operation Refusal by identifying geographical areas of concentrated refusal and the passenger groups that drivers are more likely to refuse. This allows the TLC to strategically enforce at key locations, using specially selected decoys of various race and gender who may have service animals, baby strollers, wheelchairs or luggage. Through this program, the TLC has yielded a licensee compliance rate of over 92% as of April 30.

The TLC continues its practice of doing more with less, and capitalizes upon its relationships with related governmental agencies to conduct joint operations that maximize resources. Such is our relationship with the Port Authority Police Department, forged to address the recurrent problem of hustlers at JFK and LaGuardia Airports. In response to this problem, we have agreed to conduct additional joint undercover operations at both airports. These operations will focus upon the seizure of unlicensed vehicles operating for hire, resulting in fines of up to \$1,500. In addition, we are currently training the The Port Authority Police Department to issue TLC summonses that will be adjudicated at the TLC Tribunal at JFK.

The TLC is committed, as ever, to integrating the latest technological advancements into its operations. In accordance with Mayor Bloomberg's goal to consolidate sources of public information into a single and technologically advanced call center, the TLC has been working closely with DoITT on the 311 project. In conjunction with this initiative, we are enhancing the technological capability of our call center to more efficiently receive and process 311 calls.

During Fiscal 2004, the TLC will continue to expand the ways in which licensees may communicate interactively via its website; we will build upon the abilities already in place for licensees to tap into the TLC's data base to obtain up-to-the minute information regarding the status of their license and that of their affiliated drivers. In addition, we will expand the ways in which licensees may transfer information to us. An example of this type of application is the electronic rate card service that the TLC began providing during this fiscal year. Previously, a taxicab owner or agent was required to appear in person at the TLC to record each change in the driver of record on the rate card. With these new procedures, the owner or agent may file online by visiting the TLC's official website, thereby eliminating the need to appear in person.

LiveScan, another benefit of the TLC's maximization of the use of advanced technology, was introduced at the TLC earlier this year. The TLC is now able, through the purchase and installation of specialized equipment, to electronically transmit fingerprints of applicants directly to the Department of Criminal Justice Services for analysis. LiveScan has reduced the time necessary to complete criminal background investigations from several days to an average of 24 hours.

To ensure the efficiency, integrity and data processing speed of our internal computer systems, and to support planned new applications, the TLC is in the process of upgrading its Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN). This upgrade includes the replacement of network servers, operating systems and workstations.

Despite the challenges that we all share, the TLC continues to accomplish its goals, managing its available resources to discover new ways to please its customers, ensuring public safety and doing more with less.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to responding to any questions you might have.