



185 Berry Street
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San Francisco, CA 94107

February 15, 2022

State Representative Raymond Hull
House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing
State House, Room 101
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill No. 6629, An Act Relating To Public Utilities and Carriers -
Transportation Network Company Service - Town of New Shoreham

Dear Chairman Hull and members of the Committee:

Lyft appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony respectfully opposing House Bill No. 6629. As currently drafted, House Bill 6629 would exempt transportation network companies in the Town of New Shoreham from the provisions of Rhode Island's current state law on such companies and also give the Town of New Shoreham "exclusive power to prescribe rules and regulations" for transportation network company services operating within that town.

In less than eight years, Lyft has proven to be a powerful driver of positive change with respect to economic empowerment, enhancing the efficiency of public transportation, and connecting communities previously underserved by prior transportation options. Since 2012, Lyft has worked to reduce traffic and congestion, increase mobility options, prevent D.U.I.s, stimulate local economies and provide economic opportunities for drivers.

Lyft launched in Providence, RI in March 2014, and since then our platform has facilitated hundreds of thousands of rides across Rhode Island. Every single day, Rhode Islanders rely on Lyft and we're proud to have become an important part of the state's transportation ecosystem. That is why we were pleased to work closely with the Legislature to pass a comprehensive law regulating the TNC industry (2016 - Chapter 39-14.2) which requires driver background checks, sets minimum insurance

requirements for TNC vehicles, and establishes an annual \$30,000 permit fee for TNCs with at least 200 drivers. Similar TNC laws have now been adopted by more than 45 states.

Thanks to your prior work on this issue, TNC rides are now available across the entire state of Rhode Island. From local residents who need a short ride to the grocery store or nearby restaurant, to tourists visiting Rhode Island who need access to a convenient form of transportation from/to the airport, train station, or ferry, TNCs are a convenient, reliable, and affordable option for all state residents to find access to transportation. Not only are TNCs good for passengers, they also provide an important earning opportunity for thousands of Rhode Islanders seeking to make money by driving their own cars in an extremely flexible structure. Indeed, most of Lyft's drivers in Rhode Island drive on the Lyft platform for less than 20 hours per week as a way to make a little extra money or to pay off some unexpected bills.

The passage of House Bill No. 6629 could jeopardize these benefits for passengers, drivers, and small business owners by allowing the Town of New Shoreham to regulate TNCs separate and apart from (and perhaps above and beyond) the uniform state regulatory structure wisely created by the 2016 TNC enabling statute. This would create two totally different sets of rules and regulations for TNCs operating in New Shoreham and those operating in the rest of Rhode Island - a scenario that the General Assembly clearly wanted to avoid when it originally passed the TNC law three years ago.

House Bill No. 6629 would create confusion about which one is the governing regulatory structure and with that confusion comes the distinct possibility that TNCs could effectively be barred by just one municipality while state law embraces and facilitates its operations statewide. This is duplicative given that the existing TNC statute gives the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC) broad authority to regulate the TNC industry statewide. We believe that the statewide system the Rhode Island General Assembly put in place in 2016, after careful deliberation, meets industry best practices and standards, and ensures that all Rhode Islanders have access to the multiple public safety and transportation benefits of TNCs. We therefore respectfully request that the committee reaffirm the strong public policy decision made three years ago and vote not to advance House Bill No. 6629 out of committee.

Lyft is tremendously inspired by our collective progress in advancing mobility, economic opportunity and providing residents and visitors across Rhode Island access to a world-class transportation experience. We appreciate working hand-in-hand with the Rhode Island General Assembly in our continued effort to deliver on these shared goals.

I would like to thank the Chairman and the entire Committee for taking the time to consider Lyft's input on House Bill No. 6629. Please do not hesitate to contact me at rpower@lyft.com should you have any questions regarding our written testimony.

Sincerely,

Rich Power,
Senior Public Policy Manager - East Region