



Legislation Text

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A MOTION requesting that the executive enter into negotiations with the city of Seattle to allow taxi license holders reciprocal operating rights between both the city and the county, requiring the executive to develop an ordinance to conform to adopted city of Seattle legislation if adopted and requiring letters updating the status of negotiations.

WHEREAS, King County benefits from a healthy spectrum of transportation choices. Currently, the region is served by taxis, for-hire vehicles, and limousines, and

WHEREAS, new entrants in the region's transportation market competing with taxis offer opportunities for private citizens to use smartphone application-based technology to pick up rides for fares or suggested donations. These new entrants have come to be known as transportation network companies, and

WHEREAS, state law allows cities, towns, counties and port districts to license, control and regulate privately operated taxicab transportation services operating within their respective jurisdictions, and

WHEREAS, in 1979, King County, the city of Seattle and the Port of Seattle embarked on a program to regionalize taxicab regulations and licensing by developing consistent regulations and services across jurisdictions. That effort promoted public safety and customer service by standardizing fees, regulations, enforcement and rate review procedures throughout King County, and

WHEREAS, in 1995, King County entered into an interlocal agreement with the city of Seattle for taxicab and for-hire regulation in both jurisdictions. King County also has interlocal agreements with the Port of Seattle and sixteen cities to provide taxicab and for-hire licensing services. Generally, the King County

Code and the Seattle Municipal Code contain consistent provisions, thus allowing for continued joint regulatory efforts, and

WHEREAS, taxis licensed in Seattle may pick up passengers, known as "hailing rights," anywhere within the city limits and are allowed to drop off the passenger in any other jurisdiction. Similarly, taxis licensed by the county may pick up passengers in the unincorporated parts of the county, sixteen cities and the Port of Seattle. County-licensed taxis, however, may not pick up passengers in the city of Seattle unless they have a taxicab license with both the city and the county, and

WHEREAS, on July 14, 2014, the Seattle City Council passed Council Bill 118140, which adopted a variety of for-hire regulatory changes making significant changes to existing regulations and allowed for transportation network companies to begin operating in the city, and

WHEREAS, the county council adopted Ordinance 17892 in September 2014, which changed regulations for for-hire companies, drivers and vehicles to conform to the elements adopted by the city of Seattle, requiring that all taxis, for-hire and transportation network companies must have licensed drivers and vehicles, thus allowing transportation network companies to operate in the county, and

WHEREAS, transportation network companies, unlike taxicabs, may pick up passengers anywhere in the county or city, and

WHEREAS, the introduction of transportation network companies has significantly altered the for-hire industry in this region and, taxi operators report, that the current county and city regulatory structure puts them at a competitive disadvantage, especially the regulatory restrictions on hailing rights;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. It is the intent of the council that taxi license holders in both the city of Seattle and King County have reciprocal hailing rights in both jurisdictions allowing every city or county licensee to pick up passengers inside or out of the licensee's jurisdiction.

B. The council requests that the executive enter into negotiations with the city of Seattle to allow for

this change in hailing rights policy for city taxi license holders.

C. The executive shall, based on a positive outcome of the negotiations where the city of Seattle introduces and passes legislation that modifies current hailing rights policies in city municipal code, develop and transmit to the council an ordinance to conform county ordinances with the city regulations.

D. The executive shall inform the council, by letter, of the status of negotiations by September 15, 2017, and every three months thereafter, until negotiations are concluded. The executive shall file the letter required by this motion in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.