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HIGHTECHNOLOGYCOUNCIL

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June 21, 2021

Senator Michael J. Rodrigues
Chair, Budget Conference Committee
State House, Room 212
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Rodrigues,

I am writing to urge you to oppose Senator Boncore's amendment, Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), which advanced to the Conference Committee in bill S.2465. The amendment as drafted is ill-advised policy that would do little to raise revenue for Massachusetts' transportation challenges while increasing the burden on transportation operators that have been critical mobility options throughout the pandemic and the early stages of our economic recovery.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, ride-hail operators were reliable transportation options for Massachusetts residents seeking safe carriage for fundamental needs, such as groceries and health care service. These firms were also instrumental for essential workers in need of access to additional means of transport given disruptions to public transportation service and heightened health risks across most transit modes. The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on low-income communities highlighted the value of ride-hail operators as an affordable transportation option serving those most in need of more choices, such as those who do not have access to a personal car.

The fee increase would put undue strain on an industry that has experienced significant challenges over the last year and a half. The precipitous drop in ridership has put many transportation providers in a precarious situation, and ride-hail groups are no exception. As the Massachusetts TNC Division reported earlier this month, in 2020 ride-hail companies experienced a 62% drop in rides across the Commonwealth. This decline in ridership did not impact ride-hail companies exclusively—it reflects loss of income for many TNC drivers who rely on trips for their livelihood. The fee increase would no doubt contribute to the cost of TNC service, reducing demand and hurting ride-hail companies and their drivers as they seek stability like other businesses and workers harmed by the pandemic.

We urge you to oppose Senator Boncore's amendment, Transportation Network Companies, as you finalize the Conference Committee budget. Thank you for your leadership and considering our request.

Sincerely,



Christopher Anderson
President