

House Environment and Transportation Committee
Testimony of Lyft, Inc. in Opposition to HB 1215
Submitted on behalf of Lyft, Inc. by Eleise Richards, Public Policy Manager
March 1st, 2024, 1:00 PM EST, House Office Building, Room 250

Esteemed members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective and contribute to this important discussion on HB 1215. Lyft is a multimodal transportation network company that operates across the country including Maryland. Though we support and recognize the critical need for municipalities to fund transportation projects in their communities, we cannot support the adverse impacts this fee would have on both riders and drivers throughout the state.

Rideshare has become an integral part of modern transportation, providing convenient and affordable options for individuals to travel safely from point A to point B. Not everyone has easy access to transportation and taxing rideshare rides will hurt the most vulnerable people living in underserved areas—this includes low-income residents, seniors on fixed income, and communities of color who make up 84% of our rider demographic in Maryland and could lose access to affordable, reliable rides if this bill passes. Rideshare also offers a responsible alternative to driving impaired and increasing the cost of each ride can lead someone to choose to drive themselves after drinking. Now is not the time to make it harder for people to get around their communities.

Furthermore, rideshare drivers, who are already facing numerous challenges, rely on ridesharing as a source of income and would be adversely affected by the decreased demand that results from an increase in fees. Driving with Lyft has become an important source of supplemental income for many residents—who are parents, retirees, and others trying to make ends meet. During these difficult times, we need to protect earning opportunities.

Lyft rides are already taxed locally at \$0.25 per ride for every trip taken. In addition to this bill, there is also a bill (SB 505) proposing an additional tax increase that would double what riders are already paying and there is a proposed increase on pick up and drop off fees at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport. These three additional surcharges would impose multiple levels of taxation that we believe is unfair for riders and we cannot support asking riders to pay three different taxes for the same trip. With multiple active bills proposing increases in fees, the accessibility and affordability of rideshare services would be severely compromised.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge you to oppose Maryland House Bill 1215 and any other legislation that seeks to increase fees on rideshare services. It is crucial to prioritize the needs of Maryland residents and rideshare workers while finding sustainable solutions that promote accessibility, affordability, and fairness within the transportation sector.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

Eleise Richards
Lyft Public Policy Manager, Mid-Atlantic Region