



MUNICIPAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF FARGO

March 11, 2021

RE: Testimony to House Transportation Committee – SB 2149 (Transportation Network Companies Operating at Commercial Service Airports)

Chairman Ruby and members of the committee,

I am Shawn Dobberstein, the Executive Director of the Municipal Airport Authority of the City of Fargo – Fargo’s Hector International Airport. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Thanks to all of you for your willingness to serve and represent the citizens of North Dakota.

I speak in support of SB 2149. I echo the comments made by Airport Association of North Dakota President Matthew Remyense. His testimony conveyed a number of important reasons why it is imperative that your committee provide a “do pass” recommendation.

The Fargo Airport has tried to work with Transportation Network Companies (TNC) Uber and Lyft since they began to provide service in the Fargo metro area. We are able to work with taxis, shuttles, car rentals and other ground transportation companies to coordinate access to accommodate our mutual customers. This is accomplished in accordance with the current state law, however, the current state law does not allow airports to coordinate the same access accommodations with our TNC operators such as Uber and Lyft.

I have spoken to representatives of TNC operators who are willing to enter into an agreement with the Fargo Airport Authority to improve their access to accommodate our mutual customers. Access accommodations would include the implementation of wayfinding signage, designated parking spaces to drop off and pick up passengers and a likely fee per trip. This would significantly improve the customer experience at the Fargo Airport.



The Fargo Airport has experienced a steady rise in the use of TNC options by our customers. We conducted six passenger surveys starting in June 2017 ending in December 2019. Two survey periods were conducted each year. One was during the summer months and one during the winter months. Approximately 1,400 passengers participated in each survey period. Over 8,000 passengers were engaged for the six survey events. Our June 2017 survey indicated 2% of those surveyed arrived at the airport via a TNC option. Our December 2019 survey indicated 8% of those surveyed arrived at the airport via one of the TNC options. Taxi and hotel shuttle use decreased over the same survey period from 5% to 3% and from 4% to 3% respectively. We did not survey in 2020 due to the COVID situation. The increase in TNC use does impact parking and car rental revenues streams for the airports.

Our ability to better coordinate and engage with our other ground transportation operators is hampered by our inability to engage our TNC operators with an agreement. Car rental, parking, taxi and shuttle operators in Fargo are quick to remind the Fargo Airport Authority administration that is not fair that we continue to allow the TNC businesses to operate at the airport without any ability to control their access in a coordinated manner. We have worked with Uber and Lyft corporate officials to establish a voluntary geofence on the airport property. This allows us to move the waiting TNC drivers from the curbside in front of the passenger terminal to a designated area on the airport property where they can stage to wait for their electronic requests for service from passengers arriving at the airport. We do not have the curb space in front of the passenger terminal to handle all of the Uber and Lyft vehicles that are present at any given time to park and wait for a fare. It was not safe and caused us significant traffic congestion every day. Without this voluntary cooperation, it would be traffic chaos.

In closing, I once again support the comments made earlier by Mr. Remyense. His testimony contains all of the points that are important for you to understand as you discuss the merits of this bill.

I urge you to provide a "do pass" recommendation from this committee which will allow airports to finally enter into formal agreements with TNC operators that will benefit the traveling public, both residents and visitors, that utilize the commercial service airports in North Dakota. Thank you for your time and I am available for any questions.

Sincerely,

Shawn A. Dobberstein, AAE

Shawn A. Dobberstein, AAE
Executive Director
PO Box 2845
Fargo, ND 58108-2845

701-241-1501

shawn@fargoairport.com