



City of Regina
2476 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK

September 1, 2010

Dear Members of Council,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation to urge you to reject the recommendations in the *Regina Taxi Study*.

To begin, we accept council's goal in commissioning the study as well-intentioned. After all, no one wants to experience an unsatisfactory cab ride.

However, the recommendations put forward by the author of the report go well beyond the role of government in regulating the taxi industry. Aside from basic regulations such as ensuring taxis pass regular safety checks and its drivers have proper driver's licenses, government should abstain from micro-regulating the taxi industry all together.

After all, with so many other challenges facing the city (eg. crime, infrastructure renewal, taxation), I would like you to consider if the appearance of taxi drivers or the age of the cars they drive is a top concern for your constituents? After 20 years of operations, staff at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's Regina office cannot recall a single phone call or email on the issue.

As the study notes on pages 41-42, a survey of customers found the industry scored a "good" or "ok" grade in each category examined. Thus, the author of the study has essentially discredited the need for the very widespread reform he recommends.

Despite acknowledging the industry is doing a "good" job, the report calls for council to begin approving the appearance of taxi drivers. Should council approve such a recommendation, where would it stop? Wouldn't pizza delivery men and women also need their appearance approved by council? What about hotel & motel clerks, retail salespeople and other private sector employees that interact with the public?

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As you can see, approving the appearance of taxi cab drivers not only creates a slippery slope, it is simply not the role of council to regulate the appearance of private sector employees.

The study also calls for increased bureaucracy, specifically the hiring of two new employees to manage the industry. Again, we ask you to consider - if you polled your constituents and asked about their top concerns, would any mention the hiring of new staff to regulate the taxi industry?

Particularly disappointing about the report is the call for hiking cab fees by 467% and the expensive technological burden being recommended for the taxi industry. No doubt GPS equipment and other technology could improve industry services, yet that should be a decision made by industry participants, not the government.

Please consider how Regina's members of council might react if the provincial government tabled legislation requiring the publication of each council member's cell phone number and home phone number online in order to improve services to voters?

Just as councillors should decide what personal contact information they share with their customers (the electorate), the taxi industry should decide what tools it uses to provide services to its customers.

As a regular user of taxis in Regina, I would note that I have yet to experience inadequate service. That of course does not mean that poor services aren't provided by industry participants from time to time. However, like any other industry, should a company's performance deteriorate, it will ultimately lose customers and go out of business.

In conclusion, we encourage you to reject the recommendations in the report. Thank you for considering the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's position on this matter.

Sincerely,

Colin Craig

Colin Craig

Prairie Director – Canadian Taxpayers Federation