



Protect our local economy: Extend “buy Canadian” policies and campaigns to the taxi/ride-hailing industry

On February 5, 2025, Toronto City Council unanimously passed a motion to launch a “buy Canadian” campaign and procure local and domestic products wherever possible.

We urge you to extend both campaigns to include the taxi and ride-hail industry.

US tech companies, among the Trump administration’s biggest backers,[i] have taken over too many Canadian markets, reshaping our laws and regulations to build monopoly power. The ride-hailing industry is a prime example. Uber operated illegally for years, then bankrolled an unprecedented lobby campaign to re-write the rules for vehicles-for-hire. [ii] They then successfully lobbied the province to lower labour standards for *all* gig workers - these will come into effect on Canada Day.[iii]

The results have been disastrous for our city’s economy and for local businesses:

- Our streets have become more congested with underutilized drivers
- Our transit system is losing about \$1 million per week in net lost fare revenue
- Median earnings of Uber/Lyft drivers have dropped under \$6 an hour
- Consumers are stuck with a near-monopoly of US companies that can surge prices with no limits

Any attempt by Council to meaningfully address the many impacts of the deregulated industry are met by political attack ads and litigation threats by billion-dollar US companies.

We can do better. Canadian companies can easily step in to connect Torontonians with their next ride home. App-based ride-hailing and payments are now offered by many local taxi companies as well as HOVR, a new Canadian ride-hailing platform. Spending on local services fosters local economic development, whereas for every dollar spent on multinational corporations, only about 11 cents stays in the community. [iv] Local companies will work *with* municipalities to support common-sense protecting public safety, promote affordability and foster a healthy, diverse industry - rather than trying to dismantle them.

But we need Council’s support. We urge you to:

1. **Buy Canadian!** Adopt partnership, procurement and staff reimbursement policies that commit to patronizing domestic and local vehicle-for-hire ride sourcing, and ban the use of US-based ride sourcing apps on city-issued property or for city business.
2. **Protect workers and consumers!** If Uber/Lyft threaten to leave the city, they can’t take drivers with them. But council has to support existing and emerging Canadian alternatives, and



to make it easier for drivers to work for Canadian companies by immediately moving drivers over to a single, city-issued license that can be used to work for any city-licensed dispatcher or platform.

We stand ready so drivers can keep working - and keep Torontonians moving.



Kristine Hubbard
Operations Manager, Beck Taxi



Abdulkadir Mohamoud
CEO, Co-op Cabs



Harrison Amit, Founder and CEO
HOVR



Gulab Dhillon, Director
Toronto 1 Taxi

[i] <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/dec/18/uber-ceo-trump-donation>

[ii] https://www.thestar.com/news/investigations/the-uber-files-a-kill-switch-intense-lobbying-and-driver-exploitation-leaked-documents-reveal-cutthroat/article_3337426b-e709-5f69-b575-13abab45af75.html

[iii] <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-uber-gets-almost-everything-it-wants-in-doug-fords-working-for-workers/>

[iv] <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/en/media/66-cents-of-every-dollar-spent-at-a-small-business-stays-local-versus-only-11-cents-spent-at-a-multinational-retailer>