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Philadelphia Parking Authority
Taxicab and Limousine Division
2415 S. Swanson St.
Philadelphia, PA 19148-4113

Dear Sirs,

It is about time! I've been in the bus business for almost 30 years and can't believe that there is a question as to whether disabled people should have the same opportunities as everyone else. Since the taxi industry in Philadelphia is governed by the city it must support the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Act in title II states that Public entities must comply with the regulations and "these regulations cover access to all programs and services offered by the entity".

I would suggest that the Parking Authority define some terms before the law is passed. A law with good intentions is not necessarily a good law and no one wants to see others hurt or financially burdened out of fairness. I think it is important to seek out and use the knowledge of others who have gone first in this and see what challenges they have had to overcome. As I said I have seen how the busing industry worked to meet the ADA regulations in the last 20 years. I would make sure that the manufactures of WAV vehicles were included in this process. I know New York City had some problems with trying to meet ADA regulations in their taxi system. The biggest problem was that the converted vehicles being cut up and reconstructed couldn't take the use or abuse of a city cab. Also the end-users were not familiar with the construction or power trains in the vehicles that were forced on them.

As for training I can't imagine it taking an entire week to train a driver to do the simple tasks in a way that is respectable to the person with special needs, but I know that the training is very important. If a person has an ailment we don't want to see them further injured due to lack of training. There are several professional training companies that could help with this or the PPA could work with SEPTA for insight since they already have a training program for their paratransit system. The SEPTA trainers are some of the best in the country and since they are already city employees it is an inexpensive and effective way to go. Of course you could make the dealerships delivering the vehicles provide training since they will be benefiting from this.

The first thing I ask myself when I see an accessible vehicle is "would I want my mom or son on that?" and that is how personal this system should be looked at. You already know what should be done just make sure it makes sense when it's done.

Good luck and God speed this is something that should have been done years ago.

Sincerely,

Frances Vermeylen