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MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS BILLS CAPPING EXPANSION OF UBER AND LYFT VEHICLES

Ride-sharing companies say the move will strand people throughout the city because fewer vehicles will be on the road

By Katie Honan
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New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio signed a package of bills that will limit new for-hire vehicles like Uber Technologies Inc. and Lyft Inc. and set a minimum payment for drivers during their shifts.

The bills – signed Tuesday in front of dozens of union leaders, cheering taxi drivers and for-hire drivers – set out to address congestion across the city, as well as improve working conditions for more than 100,000 drivers.

Under the laws, the city's Taxi & Limousine Commission will stop issuing new for-hire vehicle licenses for a year as it studies congestion and regulates the number of new licenses in the future. Under the measures, wheelchair-accessible vehicles would still receive licenses.

One of the new laws establishes a minimum payment that comes to \$17.22 an hour for ride-hail drivers, with the app companies making up the difference if drivers don't meet the minimum on hails during a shift. The new minimum compensation rule will be adopted within 75 days, increasing the take-home pay of for-hire vehicles by more than \$6,000 a year, according to the mayor.

Wages for taxi, livery and black-car drivers have dropped significantly as app-based companies have grown across the city. A recent study commissioned by the TLC showed that a majority of app-based drivers also made less than the current hourly minimum wage of \$13 for companies with 11 or more employees.

Mr. de Blasio, a Democrat, said the bills would create fairer pay and working conditions for drivers. "In this city we love, do we let big corporations tell us what to do?" he asked the crowd at the signing, referring to Uber and Lyft. "Here it is about the power of the people. And every one of you are such a powerful example of what it means when people get together and they organize and they fight for their rights," he said.

Representatives for app-based cars said the measures would strand riders throughout the city because fewer vehicles will be on the road. "These sweeping cuts to transportation will bring New Yorkers back to an era of struggling to get a ride, particularly for communities of color and in the outer boroughs," said Campbell Brown, a Lyft spokeswoman.

An Uber spokeswoman, Danielle Filson, said Mr. de Blasio "has shown his indifference to millions of New Yorkers who live in the outer boroughs and could be left stranded because of the broken subway system that he refuses to fix."

A spokesman for the mayor, Raul Contreras, said: "Corporations that drive 85 percent of their employees into poverty are in no position to lecture New York City. It's time to put fairness ahead of profits."