

Subject: North Shore Taxi

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From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: Mayor and Council <council@dnv.org>

CC: fonvca@fonvca.org

20 November 2003

Mayor and Council,
DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER
355 West Queens
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C.

RE: NORTH SHORE TAXI: UNSAFE TAXICABS

Members of Council will have seen recent TV and press coverage regarding the serious defects found in 8 or more taxicabs owned and operated by North Shore Taxi. This is a company operating as a District business out of 250 Pemberton Avenue, North Vancouver, BC.

The defects were discovered during inspections conducted by West Vancouver Police and ranged from exposed and unprotected propane gas tanks, broken steering wheels held together with duct tape, malfunctioning brakes, and a range of other defects.

It is felt that taxpayers should have **very** serious concerns arising out of the information provided in the newscasts:

1. Even though the company draws its business from across the North Shore, since operations are based in the District of North Vancouver, could Council and Staff assure taxpayers that the North Vancouver RCMP also conduct regular safety checks on these high-use vehicles.

Council will recall that it was also the West Vancouver police who discovered major defects in dump trucks traveling at the north end of the Second Narrows bridge earlier this year. Right or wrong, this gives the impression that West Van officers are a good deal more active in this type of enforcement than their RCMP counterparts.

2. The next major concern involves vehicle maintenance schedules. Company personnel assured TV reporters that their vehicles go in for regular mechanical checks and that the cabs pulled off the road this week had been passed by the mechanics - some as recently as last week and two weeks ago. In fact, one TV camera shot took a picture of the "passed" stamp on one of the vehicles. This happened to be a vehicle with a badly-corroded undercarriage exposing the propane gas tank.

This raises several issues: Firstly, the company doing the mechanical work and "regular safety checks" was displaying a sign which showed it to have Provincial Certification from Victoria. Minister Rich Coleman stated on camera that he would be looking into this.

The second issue relates to conflict of interest, since some of the personnel from North Shore Taxi are said to own the mechanical shop which does the maintenance and "passes" the taxis to go back on the road.

The last major item - there may well be others - relates to provincial regulations and standards, as they are applied to high-mileage vehicles operating in an area of extremely steep terrain such as the North Shore. It is suggested it might be appropriate for mileage and vehicle-age limits to be different for the North Shore than they might be for vehicles which operate in, say, on the flats in Vancouver, Richmond and/or Delta.

It seems obvious that this company has been putting the lives of its passengers at **serious** risk for some time. In fact, when I mentioned this email to Dr. Kost, he reminded me that issues of District taxi operations - safety, training and language - have appeared on Council's horizon for three years or more. Most recently, one recalls the matter being discussed when Bonnie's Taxi was protesting that it was not to be allowed a licence to operate mini-buses in the Region.

In view of the foregoing information, it would be appreciated if Council would ask Staff to immediately liaise with the RCMP, Minister Rich Coleman and with T-PAC on these and **all** related issues and report back to Council.

Once the Staff Report is to hand, it is suggested that Council consider calling the owner(s) of North Shore Taxi to appear before

Council to show why it should be allowed to continue to hold a Business Licence in the District. In fact, this is such an urgent matter as to suggest that, as an interim safety measure for the upcoming holiday season, that step should be taken at the first available opportunity on Council's Agenda.

Your early response would be appreciated.

Yours truly,

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