

Attn: Committee
Franchised Taxis Bill
Legislative Council
1 Legislative Council Rd.
Central, Hong Kong

Franchised Taxi Services Bill comments

Dear Members,

I am writing this letter to in anticipation to the Bills Committee on Franchised Taxi Services Bill, scheduled to take place on 6 January 2020.

Being one of the city's many taxi users, I would hereby like to give my comment on the proposed franchised taxi mechanism.

In my opinion, this proposed bill will not improve the city' overall taxi services, it may in fact worsen it all.

By allowing taxi operating franchises and creating so-called "premium taxis", the government shows its inability to insure that the city's 18,000 cabs offer quality service.

The 600 proposed franchised taxis will only be a facade hiding the 17,400 remaining taxis, many of which will continue to offer awful service.

The proposed "premium" taxis have in fact nothing "premium", this is how all taxis are supposed to be. Cleanliness and courtesy are not a luxury. As such, there is no justification to increase the cost of these proposed franchised taxis.

Hong Kong's taxi problem doesn't lie on whether the trade should be franchised or not. Instead, it lies on the government's inability to standardize taxi service.

The most urgent task for your committee should instead be to install Mobile Data Terminals and GPS systems on all cabs and set-up an app that would allow passengers to book a taxi.

At present, Hong Kong remains probably one of the world's most backwards cities in the matter. Indeed, it has around 35 different call stations and countless apps, many of which quickly go defunct.

There is an urgent need to set a centralized booking system and install Mobile Data Terminals in all vehicles. This system could be linked to the Transport Department's already existing apps and drivers can remain free to accept or reject orders. The already existing inefficient booking mechanism could still remain.

All major cities around the world managed to get a centralized taxi booking system. Hong Kong is the only one behind.

I would strongly recommend your committee to look into the "I Taxi" system installed in Istanbul recently. This model would be ideal to cope with current deficiencies.

I hope that these comments will be taken into consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Raphael Blet', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Raphael Blet