



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

Senate passes comprehensive new bill that brings ride-sharing and its job creating economic benefits to upstate New York

RICH FUNKE February 7, 2017

| ISSUE: **RIDESHARING**



The New York State Senate passed a comprehensive bill to bring ride-sharing to Upstate communities and improve local economies. The bill ([S4159](#)), sponsored by Senate Insurance Committee Chairman James L. Seward (R-C-I-Ref, Oneonta) provides the framework for ride-sharing companies to expand operations outside of New York City and enable new jobs to be created by offering safer, more reliable transportation options to Upstate residents and visitors.

Senator Seward said, “This is long-awaited, comprehensive legislation that will allow Uber, Lyft and similar companies to begin operating outside of New York City. Business executives, tourists, college students, and everyone in between utilize ride-sharing apps when visiting cities around the nation and the world, Upstate New York riders should not be left at the curb. This bill delivers economic, environmental, and public safety benefits and is long overdue.”

This Senate bill differs from the Executive Budget proposal by significantly cutting the taxes to be paid by ride-share customers to make it more attractive for businesses to operate here. While the Executive Budget includes a tax of 5.5 percent on rides that begin outside of New York City, the Senate’s measure cuts that tax to 2 percent and does not subject rides to the 4 percent state sales tax. That new revenue would go directly towards infrastructure improvements for roads, bridges, and county transit needs.

The measure includes important protections for both drivers and consumers as part of the regulatory framework authorizing Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft to operate in Upstate communities. It requires criminal and driving history background checks, passenger notifications of driver information and trip charges, and the adoption of non-discrimination and zero-tolerance drug and alcohol policies. The bill creates a new TNC Accessibility Task Force to identify and address barriers to and opportunities for greater access for New Yorkers of all abilities, and includes TNC drivers in workers’ compensation insurance offered through the existing Black Car Fund, among other provisions.

Senator Rich Funke (R-C-I, Fairport), said, “Ride-sharing will mean more jobs, safer roads, and better transit options for my community and those like it across Upstate. Today you can hail an Uber or Lyft in nearly every other state and even in some developing nations, but not in Upstate New York – that’s unacceptable. I thank Leader Flanagan and my Senate colleagues

for making a strong statement that Upstate ride-sharing needs to happen now, without delay, this session.”

Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer (R-C-I, Amherst) said, “Thousands of Upstate residents have been demanding the expansion of transportation network companies beyond New York City. That is why I was proud to co-sponsor and vote for legislation today to bring ride-sharing services to Western New York. This safe, affordable transportation option will help to create new jobs, boost tourist spending, support local businesses and reduce drunk driving deaths.”

Senator Fred Akshar (R-C-I-Ref, Colesville) said, “Bringing ride-sharing services to the Southern Tier will help improve the quality of life for residents of all ages and give our local young people another reason to live, work, and raise a family right here at home. Ride-sharing helps modernize our Upstate communities to make them more competitive as destinations for the young, talented people we're always looking to attract and retain.”

Senator Chris Jacobs (R-C-I, Buffalo) said, “Having ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft available in my district of Buffalo and Western New York, and all of New York state, is a top priority for me. I continuously hear from my constituents who ask why New York City has ride-sharing and our region does not. This is a prime example of the unequal treatment upstate New York receives compared to New York City. The State Senate is ready to right this wrong and I call on the State Assembly to do the same.”

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.