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Releases

Taxi, Uber workers need protections and level playing field if ride-hailing to move forward, says BCFED

Vancouver - In the debate about whether Uber and similar companies will operate in our province, BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger says workers need protection and a level playing field before ride-hailing is given the go ahead.

Appearing before the select government committee holding public hearings on how to regulate ride sharing on Jan. 9, Lanzinger outlined a series of recommendations to establish an appropriate and fair regulatory framework if ride-hailing companies are to operate in BC.

The nine-point plan includes the following measures:

1. The BC Federation of Labour believes that if a progressive regulatory framework is put in place and a level playing field is created to ensure workers are treated fairly and public safety is protected, ride-hailing companies should be allowed to operate in BC.

2. With regard to public safety, the BC Federation supports a regulatory framework that includes standardizing insurance requirements, driver qualifications and licensing, vehicle safety and inspections, and criminal records checks.

3. Instead of creating more precarious low-paying work, the goal of expanding ride-hailing services should be to protect existing good-paying jobs and create new stable, employment—jobs that pay well, provide benefits, and have some security to allow workers to support themselves and their families. The BCFED believes this important goal should be reflected in the regulatory framework for allowing ride-hailing services to operate in British Columbia.

4. Ride-hailing companies do not have a track record of good labour relations. Workers need a level playing field and more clout to deal with rich and powerful multinational companies than they would otherwise have if companies were allowed to classify employees as independent contractors. The BCFED recommends that a level playing field for workers must include a review of existing provisions of the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Code to establish a clear legal employer-employee relationship between ride-hailing companies and workers.

5. Within the employer-employee relationship, all statutory deductions will be made so that employees are covered by EI and Canada Pension Plan benefits.

6. Provisions of the Employment Standards Act should be reviewed and updated as required, and applied and enforced to set minimum workplace standards throughout the ride-hailing sector.

7. The BCFED believes the safety and well-being of ride-hailing workers must also be protected in regulatory framework by health and safety protections, including the application of the Workers Compensation Act along with the jurisdiction of the Workers' Compensation Board.

8. Riding-hailing companies must respect the constitutional right of Canadian workers to join unions and to bargain collectively to improve wages and working conditions.

9. Workers will be impacted by changes in the broader passenger transportation sector that will result from allowing ride-hailing companies to operate in BC. The BCFED recommends that a meaningful just transition program, to be funded by the industry and government, be established to assist affected workers.

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