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Revenue Bureau Delivers Report in Response to Economic and Working Conditions of Portland's Taxi Drivers

Portland, Oregon – The City of Portland Revenue Bureau, acting under the direction of Mayor Sam Adams, has completed a comprehensive review of the economic and working conditions of Portland's taxicab drivers. The review found that the effective average hourly income of Portland taxi drivers is \$6.22, more than \$2 below the Oregon minimum wage. The low hourly wages are consistent with those found in recent studies in other U.S. cities.

Taxi drivers work as independent contractors and are therefore not subject to Oregon wage laws. Driver wages are not supplemented with health care or retirement benefits, paid vacation or sick leave. Many drivers work long hours, 12 to 14 hours per day, six to seven days per week.

Taxi companies typically provide services like dispatch, insurance, credit card processing, advertising and vehicle equipment, for which the drivers pay a weekly fee, called a "kitty." "Kitty" payments averaging approximately \$500 per week are a significant factor in determining low wages for the full-time professional taxi driver.

The report also found that driver income and working conditions are significantly better for drivers at the one Portland driver-owned taxi company. Average wages are higher and working hours are shorter. This is partly due to smaller "kitty" payments at the driver-owned company.

The City regulates taxi fares and the number of permits, but does not regulate the services the taxi companies provide to the drivers. Current regulations were found to be insufficient to promote sustainable working conditions for drivers.

"This study shows that our taxi drivers, like taxi drivers in other cities, face low wages and long hours. The question is, does the status quo reflect the values of the city of Portland?" Mayor Sam Adams said. "This is not an easy issue. But this study provides an excellent basis on which to make improvements that will directly impact the working conditions of our city's taxi drivers. We can, and must, do better."

A full copy of the report can be found at <http://www.portlandonline.com/omf/index.cfm?c=57734>. The Revenue Bureau is seeking comments from industry stakeholders and the public at large. Comments can be made through the above web link.

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