
Comments for the SFCTA Meeting of 12 March, 2024

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To: clerk@sfcta.org

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Attention Board Clerk, please forward this message to the full SFCTA Board for the Regular Meeting of 12 March, 2024.

Greetings Board Chair Rafael Mandelman and Members.

Aleta Dupree for the record, she, her.

I bring you my comments concerning the work and mission of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority. I share with you my thoughts concerning Agenda Item 5, the matter of Senate Bill 915.

I submit to you, up front, that I am a user of autonomous vehicles, here after referred to as AV's. I use these AV's with some frequency, as the need arises, in order for me to adequately navigate around the City and County of San Francisco. I mention to you that I am a person of profound permanent disability, and such is connected to military service. I let you know that I am an honorably discharged Veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States, the United States Army in particular. I also submit to you that in my times of using AV's, that I have never experienced any of the negative things that are alleged in the various news reports that have been disseminated over time.

I have found AV's to offer me a safe and timely high quality transportation service that meets my needs in the moment. I am also a person very different from you, and from many in the world. And I submit to you that at times I have been passed up and therefore experienced a denial of transportation service by people who have refused to pick me up. Such to me is potentially discriminatory, especially when one sees that I am wearing a skirt. I have disability that is not visually apparent, yet I am indeed disabled, and disability comes in many forms.

What I can say is before you is that AV's do not discriminate against me on the basis of who I am. Shouldn't I be able to use transportation services without fear of being discriminated against? I think so, yet many in the world would just as well kick me and others like me, disabled and different to the curb. I should not have to worry about being sent to the back of the bus, and our Nation has a sordid history of discrimination on transportation services, especially in the Southern States in times of legalized segregation.

I cannot in good conscience support SB 915. I take great exception to various things said in the report. I haven't found local jurisdictions to be nimble, given the so called "red tape" that is often seen in permitting, zoning, and business regulations. And we should not automatically believe everything we hear, but to consider what we hear with due care and diligence. This I do myself, and I feel like I am one of a rare few who do so.

I am concerned that SB 915 will be a fast path to simple prohibition. And local jurisdictions could simply refuse to consider the matter. And so "balkanized" geographic patterns could result, restricting the free movement of passengers with and without disabilities across jurisdictional lines. I would rather see regulation that gives local jurisdictions a way to reasonably tax these services and to issue citations if traffic ordinances are violated. Yet I feel the power to prohibit must remain solely in the hands of the State of California, in the name of consistency across the board.

I ask that you remember those who need to use this most important, safe, reliable, and equitable, non discriminatory service of AV transportation. I stand in strong opposition to SB 915 unless amended to remove local prohibitive powers. It is my hope you will stand with those most in need, and oppose SB 915 unless amended in this way as well.

Thank you.