



NEWS RELEASE

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ST. CHARLES COUNTY EXECUTIVE, COUNCIL CHAIR PREPARE TO PUT UBER, LYFT ISSUE TO COUNTY-WIDE VOTE

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – As the Missouri Senate again stalls this week on approving a bill to enact a statewide regulatory system for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann and County Council Chair Mike Elam are moving forward. In the event the legislature fails to act, County Executive Ehlmann is proposing that the County Council let the voters here decide. Councilman Elam will sponsor the bill that would allow that to happen.

On the state level, Senator Bob Onder, R-Lake Saint Louis, has sponsored SB 185 and is handling the companion HB130 in the Senate, which would exempt TNCs (like Uber and Lyft) from statutes relating to regional taxicab districts. While that bill has passed out of committee, when it went to the Senate floor it was filibustered. Supporters still are hopeful that the bill will pass the Senate and be sent to the House of Representatives.

County Executive Ehlmann firmly believes these services are an important transportation option for employees, residents and visitors and wants to see them in St. Charles County. However, this is the third year legislation has been introduced to allow TNCs to operate in Missouri as they have been operating in many other states.

“While legislation has yet to come to a vote in the Missouri Senate,” County Executive Ehlmann says, “it remains preferable that the state regulate an industry that constantly crosses city and county boundaries.”

The County Executive says he would ask the Council to consider sending a Charter amendment to the voters of St. Charles County containing language nearly identical to Senator Onder’s bill. It would limit the extent to which a TNC could be regulated by the County in the unincorporated areas, or by a St. Charles County municipality in its jurisdiction.

Councilman Elam says he will be asking the County Council to table the bill after its first reading until the legislature adjourns in May. If Senator Onder’s language has not passed, then the voters of St. Charles County can be given the opportunity to decide whether they want TNCs in the community.

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“Members of the business community do not understand why, when someone flies in for a meeting, they can take a TNC from the airport to St. Charles County, but the TNC will not return to take them back to the airport,” Councilman Elam explained. “If we have some uniformity in regulation among municipalities and the County, TNC are much more likely to serve our residents. The TNC should not have to check city limits before they accept a fare.”

If passed and signed by the governor, HB130 would make the Missouri Department of Revenue the sole regulatory body, which may promulgate rules to administer the provisions of the statute. The act provides that it is the sole body of law governing TNCs and TNC drivers.

“As long as individual cities and counties are able to regulate such services as they do taxi cabs,” County Executive Ehlmann says, “those regulations, while ostensibly to protect the public safety, actually protect existing taxi cab companies from competition.”

Under the bill, TNCs must disclose the fare or fare structure on its website or digital network, provide riders the applicable rates being charged and the option to receive an estimated fare. The TNC's digital network must display a picture of the TNC driver, the license plate number of the vehicle and a detailed electronic receipt to the rider. Further, TNCs must adopt a zero tolerance policy toward drivers using intoxicating substances, enforce driver eligibility requirements, including background checks and registration, adopt nondiscrimination policies with respect to riders, and maintain individual trip records of riders and drivers.

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Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state's third largest county in both population and economic share. St. Charles County consistently ranks one of the healthiest places to live in Missouri in the County Health Rankings report published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. It is home to 12 scenic county parks encompassing more than 2,800 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.

With a population of 385,840, St Charles County is home to large employers including Citi, MasterCard Worldwide, Boeing and General Motors. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

St. Charles County employs nearly 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop.

For more information, please visit www.sccmo.org.