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Taxicab Commission Sees Room For Peaceful Coexistence Between Ride-Hailing Apps and Taxi Operators in USVI

As Digicab enters the scene, the USVI Taxicab Commission discusses regulatory frameworks to support both taxis and ride-sharing services

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With the prospect of a [new ride-sharing service](#) offering a new transportation option in the territory, concerns have been aired over its ability to coexist with existing taxi operators. Even so, The Taxicab Commission this week expressed hope that a robust regulatory framework would ensure the two services can operate peacefully side by side.

When Digicab was officially introduced via a recent online presentation, its founder Patrick Farell anticipated that there might be be “a fallout between Digicab and many taxi drivers.”

Notwithstanding, Mr. Farrell also argued that local taxi drivers have themselves admitted to their insufficient capacity to meet local demand.

Days later, stakeholders of the territory's taxi cab industry met before the Committee on Government Operations Veterans Affairs and Consumer Protection to discuss matters pertinent to the sector. Senator Javan James was the first to question whether the two entities would coexist, after learning of Digicab's intentions via the Consortium.

Elizabeth Hansen-Watley, vice chair of the Taxi Cab Commission's board was initially hesitant to answer, explaining that she would have to "know all the details of how they're going to operate." Eventually basing her response on what currently prevails on the mainland, she admitted that "I do believe ride-sharing is possible." However, for the mixed approach to be successful, Ms. Hansen-Watley suggested that the territory takes a page from the mainland where "everybody's lane is quite clear on who operates what and where the regulation lies."

As the vice-chair implied, that understanding is not yet commonplace in the USVI. She also hinted at a need for legislation action on "a little bit of amendments and even some creation of laws to to clearly dictate regulations before we move forward."?

Operators like [Digicab](#) are under the purview of the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, as opposed to the Taxicab Commission.