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ALDERMAN, 13TH DISTRICT

*The  
Garden  
District*

## **Slight traffic jam, but we are making progress on taxicab service improvements**

**Statement from Alderman Terry L. Witkowski  
May 9, 2013**

Today the Common Council proposal to reform and improve city laws pertaining to taxicab service in Milwaukee was put on hold by a vote of the Public Safety Committee. As chair of the committee, I can say that we are making progress on this important proposal, and I believe we will eventually have legislation that will be approved after further refinements are made.

Specifically, as we have explored taxicab service changes and reform possibilities, the sphere of possible items that should be addressed has expanded.

For example, after hearing from representatives of the hospitality industry earlier this week (Monday, May 6 - Public Safety Committee meeting), I have concerns that the legislation may need to be amended to address their concerns. I also believe that the committee needs to examine the issues closely so that city-wide taxi service is provided (this is currently NOT the case, we have been told).

During testimony before the committee on Monday, we heard that it is not uncommon for a one- to two-hour wait for taxi service at hotels and at private residences. In many cases, we were also informed that customers also could not secure taxi service for the return trip back home or back to their hotel.

A tavern industry representative told the committee that bars and taverns cannot get taxi “safe rides” home for those who may have had one (or three) too many.

Importantly, it is evident, based on the testimony we have received, that the city’s image is damaged when visitors find our taxi service industry is sorely lacking, or when they end up stranded at a festival, at a museum, at Miller Park, or after a night of entertainment downtown.

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Although the issue was held today at committee, the taxi service and reform legislation is not at all dead and has drawn the attention of several Council members. In fact, three members have come forward with proposals to (1) increase city taxicab permits by 50, (2) by 100, and (3) to have no cap at all. I see this activity as clearly offering options to grow the city's taxi service system and to improve it.

We need to regulate taxicab companies and not just drivers, and I intend to establish a study committee that will look at ways that taxi service to the public can be improved, and how the service can be improved in general to benefit Milwaukee. Personally, my focus will continue to be on working to improve taxi service to the public.

It has been said that Milwaukee is not a cab town; well if there's not a cab to be found, it's certainly NOT a cab town.