



NEWS FROM **Teamsters Local Union 117**

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TEAMSTER DRIVERS TAKE ACTION AT SEA-TAC AIRPORT, REFUSE “PAY-TO-WORK”

Hundreds of Taxi and Flat-Rate Drivers Unite to Stop Contractor’s Pay-To-Work Scheme

(SEATTLE) – More than 200 taxi and flat-rate drivers raised signs of protest at Sea-Tac Airport on Tuesday in a massive effort to stop airport taxi contractor Eastside for Hire from forcing drivers to pay to work. Drivers chanted “*stop the pay-to-work scam*” and “*Eastside unfair*” as they marched for nearly an hour at the taxi dispatch line on the third floor of the airport parking garage.

Last Thursday, Eastside sent drivers a notice informing them that they had until 5 P.M. on Tuesday to sign an intent to pay \$9,000 or forfeit their right to access the airport. The drivers of 405 taxicabs and flat rate vehicles in the airport fleet rely on fares from the airport as their primary source of income. Losing the right to access the airport would result in a devastating loss of business for drivers.

“Nobody has the money to pay that sum,” said taxi driver Saranjeet Shaglani. “It’s very expensive to work here. We can hardly pay the bills. So we all gathered together to get justice.”

Drivers have already paid thousands of dollars for the right to service customers at the airport. When the Port of Seattle awarded Eastside the taxi contract in 2016, drivers paid Eastside a minimum of \$4,600 per driver to join the fleet. Drivers also paid to convert their vehicles with Eastside’s branding. In addition to the cost of entry, airport drivers are charged a \$155 weekly dispatch fee and a \$6 per trip fee. Drivers say the fees at the airport are so high that many earn less than minimum wage after expenses.

“We do same hard work as every American,” said driver Simranjit Dhaliwal. “We deserve to earn a living wage and a right to have a union.”

Last summer, drivers held two protests at the airport over unsanitary bathrooms and low pay. Eastside suspended more than a dozen drivers for participating in the strike. A Port audit last year revealed that Eastside had failed to reconcile over \$700,000 in refunds for overcharges due to drivers. Drivers have filed a class-action lawsuit to recuperate the lost funds.

“Drivers at Sea-Tac Airport provide an essential service to our community,” said John Scarcy, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117. “They support our tourist industry and business travelers and ensure that local passengers are shuttled safely to and from the airport. Drivers should not be forced to pay thousands of dollars to an airport contractor just so they can keep their jobs. We demand that Eastside stop its pay-to-work scheme and allow drivers to continue to support our local economy and serve our community.”