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## TESTIMONY

**BILL: SB 288 – RE-ESTABLISH SENIOR RIDE PROGRAM**

**DIVISION FOR AGING SERVICES**

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Good afternoon, Chairwoman Chowning and members of the Transportation Committee. I am Carol Sala, Administrator for the Division for Aging Services. We are here to support SB 288, a bill that was requested by the Department of Administration. Funding for the Senior Ride Program is contingent upon passage of this bill. The Taxicab Authority funds the program and the Division for Aging Services administers it. The program sells coupon books worth \$20 in taxicab fares for \$10 to individuals 60 and older and to persons with permanent disabilities. Transfers from the Taxicab Authority provide for the sale of coupon books and supports two Administrative Assistant I positions as well as the operating needs for the program. No State dollars support this program.

Seniors and disabled individuals in the Las Vegas area have utilized the Senior Ride Program (in ever increasing numbers) since the program was established in 1980. The program was transferred from the Clark County Taxicab Authority to the Division for Aging Services in 1995. Coupons are valid for any Las Vegas taxicab company 24 hours a day, seven days a week for any location.

Seniors utilize the taxi coupons for medical emergency trips, for scheduled medical trips as well as for shopping and visiting friends and relatives. In the past we have sold an average of 18,000 to 20,000 coupon booklets per year. Participants are limited to purchasing 4 books per month due to budget limitations. The Division constantly receives requests for additional books but budgetary constraints limit the number of coupon books that can be distributed each month. It is projected that an average of 6,471 seniors will utilize the program per month during FY 03 and additionally, an average of 425 disabled individuals will participate in this coupon program monthly. In FY 02, an average of 5,994

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SUBMITTED BY: Carol Sala

seniors and an average of 396 disabled individuals utilized the program on a monthly basis. This program provides a vital service to our senior and disabled population.

Due to the Taxicab Authority's reserve level, the program was eliminated in Base in budget account #3151 for the Division for Aging Services. The Senior Ride program is included in E-500 in the Executive Budget and can be reestablished if SB 288 is passed.

We will be happy to answer any questions regarding the Senior Ride Program.