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# New York wants to put limits on ride-hailing firms such as Uber and Lyft: Not 'appy in the Big Apple

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## Resumen

The **new** rules could cause business travellers plenty of short-term pain for little benefit in the long run **RIDE-HAILING** services **such as Uber** and **Lyft** have transformed America's cities, breaking the monopoly of taxi drivers over the private-hire business. [...]the two tech **firms** have come under attack by many locals and city planners alike for increasing traffic congestion and making public-transport systems uneconomic **to** run. (Just ask business travellers who have flocked **to Uber** in droves, at the expense of taxis, rental cars, and everything else.) But in bigger cities across America and Europe, they are causing real problems, clogging streets and pulling people away from public transport, which is forced **to** raise fares and cut service **to** compensate for the shortfall, thereby driving even more people **to Uber** and **Lyft**.

## Texto completo

The **new** rules could cause business travellers plenty of short-term pain for little benefit in the long run

**RIDE-HAILING** services **such as Uber** and **Lyft** have transformed America's cities, breaking the monopoly of taxi drivers over the private-hire business. But the two tech **firms** have come under attack by many locals and city planners alike for increasing traffic congestion and making public-transport systems uneconomic **to** run. Now America's biggest city, **New York**, is preparing **to** fight back.

**New York** is **on** the verge of becoming the first major American city **to** **cap the number of ride-hailing cars on its streets**. **New** legislation being passed by its city council would stop any **new** licences being issued for **ride-hailing** vehicles while it conducts a year-long study **on** the **ride-hailing** industry and its effects. (Vehicles with wheelchair access would be exempt.)

It is not the world's first city **to** take **on** the **ride-hailing** giants. London, **Uber's** biggest European market, declined **to** renew the company's licence **to** operate in the city last year, although it eventually did so in June this year. Austin in Texas, kicked **Uber** and **Lyft** out in 2016 after they refused **to** comply with its security measures; they returned a year later. And this is not the first effort **to** place **limits on** the two **firms** in **New York**. The mayor, Bill de Blasio, tried and failed in 2015 **to** impose a cap **on** the number of **ride-hailing** vehicles. But since then, the number of for-hire vehicles in the city has nearly doubled, **to** more than 100,000, prompting demands for **new** measures.

If **New York** succeeds in limiting **Uber** and **Lyft**, other cities facing similar issues may follow suit. **Uber** and **Lyft** market their services—particularly the shared-ride option they offer—**as** a way **to** reduce the number of trips taken in private cars. In reality, according **to** a **new** study by Bruce Schaller, a transportation analyst, app-based **ride-hailing** services have added nearly 6bn miles of driving a year in the nine cities he studied. For each mile of personal driving removed, these services add 2.8 miles of driving. (This figure is for solo rides; including shared-ride services **such as Uber** Pool and **Lyft** Line, it drops slightly, **to** 2.6 miles added for each mile removed.) That is because 60% of the time that people use these services, they would otherwise have walked, cycled, used public transport, or not taken the trip at all.

In some areas that have modest traffic and do not rely **on** public transport, these downsides may not outweigh the benefits **Uber** and **Lyft** bring in terms of cheaper fares. (Just ask business travellers who have flocked **to Uber** in droves, at the expense of taxis, rental cars, and everything else.) But in bigger cities across America and Europe, they are causing real problems, clogging streets and pulling people away from public transport, which is forced **to** raise fares and cut service **to** compensate for the shortfall, thereby driving even more people **to Uber** and **Lyft**.

What do the caps **on ride-hailing firms** mean for business travellers? In the short term, some pain. Waiting times for rides might grow longer, and prices would increase. Taxi drivers could use the **new** measures **to** force customers **to** pay more for their rides. But in the long run, there could be some benefits: less traffic **on** the roads, shorter journey times and perhaps a more fiscally sustainable public-transport system. Whether those gains are worth the short-term pain remains **to** be seen, at least until places **such as New York** actually follow through **on** their threats.

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