

CITY

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ES / B5

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Page B1

Disabled woman wins rights fight against taxi business

But faces six-month wait for equal access

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Donna Martyn has won her case before the Alberta Human Rights Commission, but the tears streaming down her face show it doesn't feel like a victory.

The commission agreed the disabled in Edmonton are discriminated against by taxi companies. But by giving all parties six months to respond, Martyn feels her eight-year battle for disabled rights has again been needlessly delayed.

"I just want to get taxi service and it looks like I'll never get it," an emotional Martyn said Tuesday after the decision was released. "All the parties think the appropriate response is 'no,' and then shift the responsibility to others," she said. "They've been passing the buck for eight years. What good will another six months do? I don't see how this recommended remedy is going to remedy anything."

Martyn, who is unable to walk due to a condition similar to multiple sclerosis, claims disabled people have to book DATS service two days in advance. It's difficult to get wheelchair-accessible taxi service when they want it

and it generally costs much more than a regular cab ride.

Martyn named the province, the city, the taxi commission and local cab companies in her complaint.

The companies say they can't provide the service without being subsidized. The province says it's a municipal responsibility. The city says it's not responsible and

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the taxi commission says it tried but can't order companies to provide the service.

David Haynes, a human rights officer, concluded there was discrimination.

"I recommend that Alberta Infrastructure and the city be given six months to explore their options and formulate an appropriate response," he wrote.

Haynes acknowledged the cab companies would need to be subsidized to operate such a service without losing money.

See TAXI / back of section