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Deputy CEO John Catoe takes delivery of Metro's 2000th Clean Air Bus at Earth Day ceremony with the support of Chung Liu, at center, Deputy Executive Officer of Technology Advancement for the South Coast Air Quality Management District, and Darrell Clarke, right, Chair of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter Transportation Committee. *Photos by Luis Inzunza*



Metro Marks Earth Day by Taking Delivery of 2,000th Clean Air Bus

- Metro Liner to be used on Metro Orange Line, high ridership corridors

By DAVE SOTERO

(April 15, 2005) Marking its environmental contribution to Earth Day, Metro announced Friday that it has taken delivery of its 2,000th transit vehicle that operates on clean-burning compressed natural gas.

In a ceremony with the South Coast Air Quality Management District, California Air Resources Board and Sierra Club, Metro officially took delivery of the custom-built CNG Metro Liner, a 60-foot, high-capacity articulated transit vehicle manufactured by North American Bus Industries.

Metro has ordered 200 Metro Liners, which will be put into service on

many of Metro's highest ridership corridors, and on the Metro Orange Line scheduled to open in the San Fernando Valley later this year.

"Today Metro celebrates a significant milestone for clean air transportation in Los Angeles County," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "We were the first transit agency to commit to compressed natural gas buses on such a massive scale, and today we operate the largest CNG fleet in the nation, with 80 percent of our entire fleet running on CNG.

'Cleaner air for everyone'

"Metro is pleased that its alternative fuel vehicle procurement policy, begun 12 years ago, is today contributing to cleaner air for everyone," Catoe added.

Compared with its diesel-powered buses, the agency's CNG bus fleet reduces emissions of particulate matter by over 90 percent, carbon monoxide by over 80 percent, and greenhouse gases by over 20 percent.

"We applaud Metro's continued commitment to increase its clean bus fleet," said Chung Liu, of the South Coast Air Quality Management District. "Metro's leadership in building the largest clean-fueled transit bus fleet in the nation has significantly reduced unhealthful diesel exhaust in this area."

"As we celebrate Earth Day this year, I'd like to highlight Metro's contribution to regional air quality," said Darrell Clarke, who chairs the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter Transportation Committee. "Metro's record fleet of cleaner-fuel CNG buses and electrically powered trains provide an important alternative to automobile air pollution."

Metro's long-standing commitment to alternative fuel vehicles has also helped drive innovations in bus technology.

Built from scratch

The Metro Liner was built from scratch for the demanding Los Angeles market, and is an entirely new aerodynamic design. The bus has the industry's first engine built from the ground up to operate on CNG. Its 320-horsepower engine is 25 percent more powerful than a typical bus engine.

Metro's experience with CNG buses has been positive.

While maintenance costs are typically 15-20 percent higher than diesel buses, due to higher parts costs and increased maintenance requirements, Metro expects this price differential to decrease as diesel engines and exhaust systems require reconfiguration to meet increasingly stringent California Air Resources Board emission reduction rules.

"The California Air Resources Board is proud to partner with Metro to ensure that this new generation of buses is as clean as possible," said Bob Cross, chief of CARB's Mobile Source Control Division. "Together we are making great strides toward improving air quality, as well as meeting the diverse transportation needs of Southern California."