



# NEWS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **MTA RECEIVES UNPRECEDENTED GRANTS FOR ITS CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY**

The MTA has received two landmark clean air grants totaling \$8.4 million to help purchase new compressed natural gas (CNG) buses that will be in service by spring of next year.

The Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) -a regional clean air funding group- provided \$6.4 million to help purchase 277 CNG buses. This is the largest single clean air award of its type ever in Southern California.

In addition, the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) approved more than \$2 million to assist MTA in purchasing 73 additional CNG buses. This award is funded by the State Air Resources Board, through a \$25 million program known as the Carl Moyer Memorial Fund whose goal is the replacement of diesel engines with clean fuel equivalents.

"Thanks to the MSRC and the AQMD, these awards will help us to maintain our commitment to clean air and provide better bus service for the citizens of Los Angeles County," said Julian Burke, MTA chief executive officer. "In a time of budget challenges, this assistance is welcome news."

The \$8.4 million in funding will help offset the difference between the cost of a CNG bus and a diesel bus. The average cost of a CNG bus is \$325,000. This is approximately \$40,000 more than a comparable diesel bus.

(MORE)

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### AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS FOR CONTINUING CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

The EPA (two federal) and Pennsylvania (state) grants are available to help pay for a wide range of air quality improvement projects. The grants are available to public and private entities. The grants are available to help pay for a wide range of air quality improvement projects. The grants are available to help pay for a wide range of air quality improvement projects. The grants are available to help pay for a wide range of air quality improvement projects.

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The buses will be built by North America Bus Industries (NABI), New Flyer of America and Neoplan. The MTA will begin receiving funding on a schedule matching the delivery of the new buses, set to finish by spring of 2000.

"The financial assistance by the MSRC and AQMD are significant because they recognize the dedication and hard work MTA provides to improve air quality and bus service in the Greater Los Angeles area," said Thomas Conner, MTA executive officer of transit operations. "This should set a precedent for clean air funding programs in the future."

The MTA competed against other transit agencies in Southern California and submitted a cost effective proposal. The MTA awards are the result of months of work by the agency's staff and elected officials.

The MTA already has 696 Neoplan CNG buses and will soon begin receiving 223 CNG buses manufactured by New Flyer Industries headquarters in Winnipeg, Canada.

In January of 2000 the MTA will also begin deploying 215 low floor CNG buses manufactured by NABI.

The MRSC is an eight member committee consisting of representatives of Southern California county transportation commissions along with other state and local officials. The MSRC funds clean air projects from part of a \$4 fee paid through annual vehicle registrations.

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