



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MTA OFFICIALS ASK CONGRESS FOR \$158.8 MILLION FOR METRO RAIL CONSTRUCTION

The MTA is asking Congress for \$158.8 million to continue design and construction of Metro Red Line extensions to the San Fernando Valley, East Los Angeles and the Mid-Cities area.

Four MTA directors -- Los Angeles Mayor Richard J. Riordan, City Councilman Richard Alatorre, Duarte Councilmember John Fasana and Central City Association CEO Carol E. Schatz -- joined MTA Interim CEO Joseph E. Drew in testimony today (Feb. 27) before the House Appropriations Committee. The officials also requested an additional \$40 million for bus and rail operating and capital improvements and funds for three other local transit-related projects.

The requested \$158.8 million would be the Administration's FY 1997 Full Funding Grant Agreement allocation and would be a \$73.8 million increase over the FY 1996 appropriation of \$85 million for Metro Rail construction.

Joining in the bi-partisan presentation before the committee were Republican Representatives David Dreier, Jerry Lewis and Steve Horn and Democratic Representatives Julian Dixon, Esteban Torres and Jane Harman.

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"The federal government's continued support for public transportation in Los Angeles is a cornerstone of the local, state and federal partnership to improve our region's public transportation system, air quality and economy," Riordan told the committee, noting that Los Angeles taxpayers voted to provide 45 percent of the cost of constructing the Red Line.

Drew said one day of Metro Rail construction means an investment of \$3 million in the U.S. economy, mostly in Southern California. About \$650,000 of that goes to minority- or women-owned businesses. In 1995, he said, rail construction created more than 15,000 jobs and expects to have created more than 100,000 jobs by the time the project is completed.

Noting that he represents one of the most transit-dependent, densely populated regions of the county, Alatorre said residents of East Los Angeles "look forward to the enhanced transit service and the economic development opportunities that will exist along the (Red Line) transportation corridor."

Riordan also called on Congress to continue ISTEA Section 9 funding for the operation and capital costs of the MTA's fleet of 2,050 buses, which he said serve 95 percent of all transit riders in Los Angeles. He said the 48 percent reduction in FY 1996 Section 9 funds "was a serious blow to the residents and economy" of the city.

Riordan said the MTA is requesting \$3 million to continue the successful Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) project he started in 1994. Federal Transit Administrator Gordon Linton recently visited three LANI sites, calling them a "national model to demonstrate how transportation seed funding can help empower neighborhoods to turn themselves around," Riordan said.

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In testimony before the committee, Fasana and the others asked for the final \$22 million of the federal government's commitment to the Advanced Technology Transit Bus (ATTB), also known as the "Stealth Bus." The bus currently is in the design and fabrication phase at Northrup Grumman Corp. in El Segundo, with the first prototype bus to roll out in October.

Six ATTB prototypes, scheduled for completion by the end of 1998, will be tested in Los Angeles and other cities involved in the national development project.

Drew told the committee \$15 million in federal funding is needed to match \$27.5 million in local funds for the Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway. This project will reconfigure a 2.5 mile segment of State Route 2 between the San Diego Freeway and Century City/Beverly Hills beginning in 1998.

As CEO of the 250-member Central City Association, Schatz said, "Transportation funding for infrastructure programs and projects is critical to the Los Angeles region's (ability to compete) in today's global economy. The efficient movement of people, goods and services is a must for economic development."

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