



NEWS

November 20, 1997

CONTACT: ED SCANNELL/JIM SMART
MTA MEDIA RELATIONS
(213) 922-2703/922-2700
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MTA TO MOVE AHEAD ON PURCHASE OF 223 COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS BUSES; BOARD AUTHORIZES INVITATION FOR BID FOR AN ADDITIONAL 215 LOW FLOOR CNG BUSES

The MTA Board of Directors today confirmed its previous approval for the purchase of 223 new compressed natural gas (CNG) buses and, in addition, gave the green light to invite bids for a new procurement of 215 low floor CNG buses.

"This is another example of how MTA is living up to both the letter and the spirit of the October 1996 Consent Decree," said Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Board Chairman Richard J. Riordan. "We are committed to improving the quality of bus service in the region by replacing older buses with state-of-the-art vehicles."

In September, the board approved the purchase of 223 regular floor CNG buses with an option for an additional 55 buses subject to Interim CEO Julian Burke's assessment of the availability of funding, warranties and equipment flexibility, and pending protests by competing bus manufacturers.

As part of today's action, the board rescinded the option and instead approved a new procurement of 215 low-floor buses which will accommodate the 55-bus option plus an additional 160 replacement buses outlined in MTA's Long Range Plan bus replacement schedule.

"By initiating a new procurement, MTA will be able to incorporate low floor buses into the fleet much sooner, and that makes sense for our passengers and for the MTA," said Ellen Levine, executive officer for operations.

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"Low floor buses make boarding much easier and quicker, and since they use ramps rather than wheelchair lifts no wheelchair patron will be left stranded," added Levine.

As the result of a recent budget review, Burke determined that sufficient funds will be available for the procurement of the 223 regular floor CNG buses.

The new buses will operate from the Arthur Winston Central City Division in South Central Los Angeles and the Cypress Park Division. CNG fueling stations will be constructed at both divisions.

The buses will be manufactured by New Flyer of America, based in Cookston, Minnesota. The cost per bus is \$319,789 for a total cost of \$83.6 million. Approximately 40 buses will be delivered each month beginning in February, 1999.

Delivery of the new low floor buses could begin as early as calendar year 2000.

MTA operates the largest compressed natural gas fleet in the nation. The purchase from New Flyer of will increase MTA's CNG fleet to 823. The new buses will be equipped with automated voice annunciation systems to relay audio and video messages to passengers, personal computer-based diagnostic tools to maintain engine electronic fuel controls, headsigns and digital security systems, bicycle racks on the front bumper, and wheelchair lifts. Each bus will seat 43 passengers.

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