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MTA Board Votes to Buy 297 Buses to Comply with Federal Court Order

By Marc Littman

(September 30) Complying with a federal court order, the MTA will immediately initiate the purchase of 297 new buses on top of the 2,095 buses the transportation agency already is buying to improve Metro Bus service and reduce overcrowding.

The MTA Board of Directors approved the action, Sept. 29, in response to an order issued last week by Chief United States District Judge Terry Hatter, Jr.

It will cost \$116 million to buy the 297 new buses and \$97 million during the next five years to operate additional buses beyond the service expansion the MTA already is implementing to overhaul the Metro Bus system and improve the quality of its service. In 1999, the MTA already planned to deploy 160 additional buses during weekday rush hours.

MTA directors instructed CEO Julian Burke to develop a financial plan for operating additional service. Burke will report back to the Board in October on his progress in identifying those funds.

Since it is impossible for the agency to meet the judge's 30 day deadline to obtain 248 temporary buses while the new coaches are being ordered and built, the Board authorized the CEO to take appropriate legal actions to request a stay of the Sept. 23 court order. The CEO and legal counsel also will file an appropriate notice with the court while determining whether to appeal other aspects of the judge's order.

MTA Board Chair and Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke said after the Board vote that the agency "is trying our best" to provide the best, safest and most efficient bus service for Metro riders.

Full text of the Board's Decision

MTA Board of Directors September 29, 1999

1. The CEO is directed to immediately initiate procurement and funding actions required to purchase 297 buses. 195 buses are to be purchased for delivery as soon as possible and 102 buses are to be delivered no later than June 30, 2002; **buses to be acquired without taking any current or future funding from Municipal operators.**
2. The CEO is directed to develop a financial plan to operate the additional buses required by the Court Order. Staff shall consult with the JWG and Special Master as required. Report back to the Board in October concerning progress in identifying operating funds.

3. Since the Board understands that it is impossible:

(a) to meet the 30-day requirement to "obtain 248 buses on a temporary basis", and

(b) to determine at this time whether to appeal any aspect of the Order until the contemplated further proceedings before the Special Master;

the Board instructs the CEO, in consultation with legal counsel, to file a motion to stay the September 23 Order of the District Court and to file an appropriate notice of appeal, **including an appeal as to the extent of the exercise of authority over the means of compliance with the Consent Decree.**

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