

Board Authorizes Purchase of 370 CNG Buses; Delivery to Begin by End of FY 2002

By RICK JAGER

(May 25) The MTA Board today voted to authorize CEO Julian Burke to purchase 370 additional compressed natural gas buses. The buses are scheduled to begin arriving by the end of FY 2002.

The new low-floor CNG buses will be purchased from North American Bus Industries (NABI) and manufactured in Anniston, Ala. at a cost of \$307,694 per bus for a total contract price of \$115,424,954.

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The new purchase is required to ensure that the MTA meets its service demands into the future. The bus procurement is included in the adopted Accelerated Bus Procurement Plan which calls for buying 2,095 new buses through FY 2004. This will ensure continued compliance with the plan to modernize the agency's bus fleet, improve service reliability and relieve overcrowding.

Opted not to buy diesel

In approving the purchase of CNG buses, the Board opted not to buy diesel-powered buses as part of its policy and commitment to buy only alternate fueled buses for the region.

MTA presently operates the nation's largest fleet of alternative fueled buses with approximately 900 CNG buses now in service and 670 additional CNG buses under contract for delivery over the next two years. With the current bus purchase, by June 30, 2002, the MTA will have 1,940 CNG buses in its fleet.

The new CNG bus procurement approved by the Board today meets, and in some cases exceeds, all state and local air quality regulations, including newly adopted California Air Resources Board (CARB) statewide transit bus rules that require transit agencies to increase the number of cleaner-burning buses over the next 10 years.

Record amount of service

The MTA and its contract bus lines will offer a record amount of bus service in FY 2001, eclipsing the previous record set in mid-1980's by the SCRTD.

The MTA budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1, 2000, calls for deploying at least 2,012 buses during weekday rush hours to reach a total of 7,271,125 annual bus revenue service hours between the MTA and its contract carriers.

The FY 2001 budget calls for spending \$1.161 billion, or 46 percent of the total budget, on MTA bus operating and capital and municipal bus operator subsidies, compared to \$1.119 billion, or 44 percent, this year.

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