

**STATEMENT**

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## **MTA Board Decision to Appeal Consent Decree**

- **Board will seek Supreme Court clarification of compliance measurement from Consent Decree.**
- **Board orders action plan in 60 days on further implementation of Consent Decree.**

(Jan. 9, 2002) The MTA Board of Directors unanimously approved a proposal by Los Angeles Mayor Jim Hahn, Wednesday, to direct the MTA to come back in 60 days with an action plan to present to the Special Master on how the MTA will further implement the Consent Decree.

In addition, after serious thought and debate, the Board voted to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to clarify how to measure compliance with the Consent Decree and what role the federal courts can play in solving transportation problems.

The MTA reaffirms its commitment to the Consent Decree and will continue to fulfill its obligations under that agreement reached in 1996. We are not seeking to dissolve the agreement, but instead have plans underway to move forward with Metro Bus improvements. As new buses arrive almost daily, we're proposing a massive expansion of the popular Metro Rapid Bus program, construction of new busways, and decentralizing service to give communities more local control, among other improvements.

But, as it is currently interpreted, the Consent Decree has become a roadblock that threatens our ability to provide meaningful solutions to traffic problems, and chokes off transportation improvements for all of the residents of Los Angeles County, including bus riders.

Several weeks ago the Board postponed its decision on this issue and directed the MTA to reach a reasonable solution to this dispute. However, over the past eight weeks of meetings in which our CEO has been personally involved, the plaintiffs have refused to respond to our repeated attempts to settle the dispute.

The MTA Board feels it is a misuse of taxpayer money for the courts to order the MTA to keep adding buses on lines where there's already plenty of service scheduled, at the expense of areas that are underserved by buses, or which could be better served by other transit tools.

Against this backdrop, the MTA Board felt it had no choice but to exercise its duty to represent the transportation interests of all Los Angeles County residents and appeal.

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