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### 'Big Rig' Freeway Service Patrol Assists 886 Trucks in 8 months

(June 16, 2006) During the first eight months of a two-year demonstration project, the Metro Freeway Service Patrol "Big Rig" service assisted 886 disabled vehicles on the I-710 freeway.

Since last October 3, two heavy-duty tow trucks provided by Metro have patrolled a 17-mile stretch of the I-710 between Pacific Coast Highway and 3rd Street in the City of Commerce, just south of Rte. 60. The service is operated from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays.

Statistics collected between October 2005 and May 2006 show the highest number of assists – 139 – were made the first month of the demonstration. Assists averaged 110 a month over the eight-month period, with 5 to 7 assists per day.

Figures show that the great majority of assists – 47 percent – were for mechanical problems, while 13 percent involved collisions. Some 239 trucks, or 27 percent, required towing.

"While the demonstration project is still in its early stages," says Byron Lee, Metro's director of Motorist Services, "the results from the first eight months indicate that there is a need for this kind of operation."

Tow truck operators can assist by either doing minor repairs, or by providing sufficient fuel to get the vehicle to the nearest gas or diesel station. More seriously disabled vehicles are towed off the freeway to designated drop locations.

The purpose of the demonstration is to ease traffic congestion by more quickly locating and providing assistance to a disabled truck weighing three tons or more. The demonstration project is for a two-year period, with an option for a third year.