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Jury Awards Injured Metro Bus Passenger \$13.8 Million

(June 8, 2007) A Superior Court jury awarded \$13.8 million, Thursday, to a passenger who suffered permanent brain damage and partial paralysis from injuries incurred when a Metro Bus hit a parked vehicle in Santa Monica in June 2005.

Joseph L. Garcia, 58, struck his head on the interior of the bus during the accident on Santa Monica Boulevard. He will require 24-hour attendant care for the rest of his life, his attorneys said. They had sought damages of \$48 million.

In court, Metro admitted liability before testimony began and the trial continued on the issue of damages.

The operator had been driving about three months when the accident occurred. She was terminated shortly after the accident.

In paying the \$13.8 claim, Metro will use \$4.5 million from its self-insured retention fund. The \$9.3 million remainder will be covered by the agency's excess liability insurance.

