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California Office of Homeland Security (OHS) Director Matthew Bettenhausen (from left), Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa, Metro CEO Roger Snoble and Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau Commander Dan Finkelstein each spoke about the importance of the OHS dispersal of \$16.1 million to Metro. California Governor Arnold Schwarznegger signed the "giant" check. *Photo by Dave Sotero*

Metro Granted County Homeland Security Funds

(July 16, 2008) More than \$16 million was given to Metro by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security (OHS), July 15, as part of a dispersal of funds to increase mass transit security statewide.

At an event attended by Metro CEO Roger Snoble and Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa, California Homeland Security Director Matthew Bettenhausen said transit security was an important issue at all levels of government.

"These funds will not only help Metro with the challenges of keeping area residents safe, they will also help protect our investment in the infrastructure, which is crucial to keeping our economy strong," Bettenhausen said.

The money was awarded to help fund the implementation of a gating system on Metro's Red and Purple lines and on some select light rail stops. The Metro Board approved the gate project in February.

The 10-year lease contract for installation and maintenance of the gates, expected to cost \$46 million, went to Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. The gates are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and should be installed within two years.

Primarily a weapon to combat fare evasion, the 379 fare gates should reduce the number of civilian fare inspectors needed to patrol those areas. The gates are expected to contribute to security by allowing sworn law enforcement officers to return to their jobs serving and protecting—rather than dealing with fare evasion.

“Commuters should never have to fear for their safety while traveling to work or trying to get home each day,” Villaraigosa said. “This funding will be a key component in ensuring safe commutes for local residents and making Metro a model for transit security nationwide.”

The \$16.1 million was part of \$60 million of the current state budget set aside to fulfill the voter-approved Proposition 1B, which passed in November 2006.

-- Dave Sotero and Rick Jager contributed to this report