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DECLARING AN IMPASSE, MTA ISSUES "LAST, BEST AND FINAL OFFER" TO BUS AND TRAIN OPERATORS' UNION

Union Leaders Given One Day to Accept Offer

LOS ANGELES, The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today gave the bus and train operators' union, the United Transportation Union (UTU), a last, best and final offer, including the highest wage and benefits package offered to date. The offer contains significant improvements in employee take home wages and protection of health and pension benefits. The MTA also stated that it would give the UTU until 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 12, 2000, to accept the offer.

"We firmly believe that the membership would accept this very attractive offer if the UTU leadership presents it to our employees," said MTA Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. "Many of the benefits offered in this contract are better than those offered in the last contract this membership ratified three years ago. Yet, it also contains improvements in operations that will allow the MTA to enhance efficiency and productivity," added the MTA Chair.

This final offer was made on the 25th day of one of the longest strikes in MTA's history and follows more than five months of unsuccessful attempts by MTA negotiators to get the UTU to negotiate in good faith to reach an agreement. In recent weeks, the MTA Board of Directors

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and management have become increasingly resolved to end this strike immediately. This last offer has incorporated elements designed to ensure quick approval from UTU leaders.

“The strike has gone on too long,” said Los Angeles Mayor Richard J. Riordan. “We must get bus and train service back on the street. The proposal on the table provides fair wage increases to our employees. It also will allow the MTA to maintain and expand transit service in the future.”

This last offer comes as UTU leaders have refused to provide any significant movement in their position over the last few days. “Because of this lack of progress, we concluded that the only possible means of ending this strike was to issue a final offer, with a specific deadline,” said MTA Chief Executive Officer Julian Burke.

If the UTU accepts the offer, the MTA and the union will sign a new contract and employees can return to work immediately. If the UTU rejects the contract offer, the MTA intends to present its proposal directly to MTA bus and train operators, to ensure its employees are fully aware of the MTA’s contract offer. In the interim, the MTA will not release the details of its final offer.

“Out of respect for the union’s need to consider this final proposal on its own terms, the MTA will not release any details about this offer until after we receive a response from the union,” added CEO Burke.

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