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CONTACT:

Marc Littman

MTA MEDIA RELATIONS

(213) 922-4609

BUS AND RAIL OPERATORS APPROVE LABOR CONTRACT

MTA Turns its Focus Toward Reaching Agreement with Mechanics and Clerks Unions

(LOS ANGELES) The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is pleased that the members of the bus and rail operators' union, the United Transportation Union (UTU), voted to ratify the tentative collective bargaining agreement.

"It is extremely good news that our employees approve of the fair deal we reached with the UTU leadership earlier today, and I thank our employees for their support," said MTA Chief Executive Officer Julian Burke. "This agreement will go a long way toward ensuring the long-term financial viability of the MTA. By the end of this three-year agreement, combined with future administrative cost-cutting measures being implemented by management, this agency will be much closer toward being competitive with other local transportation providers," continued CEO Burke.

The agreement reached between the MTA and the UTU came early this morning after six months of negotiations, a 32-day strike and an around-the-clock bargaining session last night. Earlier today the MTA Board of Directors unanimously ratified the tentative agreement. The contract includes some of the following terms:

- An increase in base wages over three years, including quarterly wage adjustments
- A 1% increase in take-home pay resulting from increased MTA pension contributions
- Maintenance of health and welfare benefits, with increased MTA contributions if necessary

- A reduction in MTA's earlier request for an increase in part-time operators, resulting in an increase of 50% more part-time positions over three years
- Slight modifications in scheduling rules that allow the MTA to make necessary savings in order to meet future service expansion goals

Contract negotiations with representatives of the Amalgamated Transportation Union (ATU) and the Transportation Communications Union (TCU) are continuing. Together, the three unions represent over 6,700 bus drivers, train operators, mechanics and clerks.

As a result of the contract agreement, bus and rail operators have called off their strike and the other two unions who were honoring their picket lines will return to work with them immediately. Metro bus service will resume on Wednesday October 18, and Metro rail service will resume on Thursday. To show its appreciation to its customers, the MTA is offering free rides for five days from Wednesday October 18th through Sunday October 22nd.

"The transit dependent were particularly hurt by this strike," said MTA Chair and Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite Burke earlier today at a press conference announcing the MTA's ratification of the contract. "They deserve something in consideration for the hardship they have endured over the last month. And we hope that this invitation to ride the buses and trains for free will help encourage everyone to consider riding the MTA's system in the future," added Chairperson Burke.

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