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**Metro Approves New Towing Contracts to Help Stranded Freeway Drivers**

Motorists stranded on local freeways will benefit by action taken Thursday, September 23, by the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board.

Directors approved three contracts valued at \$5.5 million for Metro Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) service. The program, which started in 1991, assists an average of 350,000 motorists a year in getting their cars and trucks started or safely removed after they stall on Los Angeles County freeways, resulting in congestion relief. Metro, CHP and Caltrans jointly administer the program. The service is free to motorists.

Altogether, 149 tow trucks patrol more than 400 miles of county freeways. Tow truck drivers respond to minor incidents and assist motorists who run out of gas, need a flat tire changed, radiator hoses taped and similar assistance.

Metro contracts for FSP service on 40 different routes or beats and operates on an annual budget of approximately \$23.7 million. Metro directors this week awarded contracts to three different contractors on four beats whose contracts are lapsing. They include Panorama Towing, San Fernando, for \$1,461,724; Sonic Towing, Los Angeles, for \$3,028,086; and Jon's Towing, Los Angeles, for \$960,512. The contract period for all three contracts will be from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007.

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