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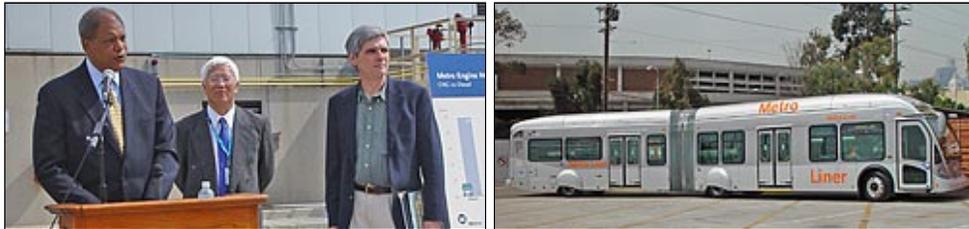
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metro Marks Earth Day Milestone by Taking Delivery of 2,000th Clean Air Transit Bus

- Metro's compressed natural gas bus fleet, the largest in the nation, helps bring cleaner air to Los Angeles County

PHOTOS: LUIS INZUNZA



Metro Deputy CEO John Catoe, at left, with Chung Liu, Deputy Executive Officer of Technology Advancement for the South Coast Air Quality Management District, and Darrell Clarke, Chair of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter Transportation Committee, takes delivery of Metro's 2000th clean air bus, at right, at Earth Day ceremony.

Marking its environmental contribution to Earth Day this year, Metro today announced that it has officially taken delivery of its 2,000th transit vehicle that operates on clean burning compressed natural gas.

In a special ceremony today with the South Coast Air Quality Management District, California Air Resources Board and Sierra Club, Metro took delivery of the brand new, custom-built compressed natural gas (CNG) Metro Liner, a gigantic, high-capacity articulated transit vehicle manufactured by North American Bus Industries of Anniston, Ala.

Metro has ordered 200 60-foot Metro Liners, which will be put into service on many of Metro's highest ridership corridors, and on the Metro Orange Line transitway scheduled to open in the San Fernando Valley later this year.

"Today Metro celebrates a significant milestone for clean air transportation in Los Angeles County," said John Catoe, Deputy CEO, Metro. "We were the first transit agency to commit to compressed natural gas buses on such a massive scale, and today we operate largest CNG fleet in the nation, with 80 percent of our entire fleet running on CNG. Metro is pleased that its alternative fuel vehicle procurement policy, begun 12 years ago, is today contributing to cleaner air for everyone."

Compared with its diesel-powered buses, the agency's CNG bus fleet reduces emissions of particulate matter by over 90 percent, carbon monoxide by over 80 percent, and greenhouse gases by over 20 percent.

"Some of the dirtiest air in the nation is right here in the Los Angeles area," said Chung Liu, Deputy Executive Officer of Technology Advancement for the

South Coast Air Quality Management District. "We applaud Metro's continued commitment to increase its clean bus fleet. Metro's leadership in building the largest clean-fueled transit bus fleet in the nation has significantly reduced unhealthy diesel exhaust in this area."

"As we celebrate Earth Day this year, I'd like to highlight Metro's contribution to regional air quality," said Darrell Clarke, Chair of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter Transportation Committee. "Metro's record fleet of cleaner-fuel CNG buses and electrically powered trains provide an important alternative to automobile air pollution."

Metro's long-standing commitment to AFVs has also helped drive innovations in bus technology. The Metro Liner was built from scratch for the demanding Los Angeles market, and is an entirely new aerodynamic design. The bus utilizes the industry's first engine built from the ground up to operate on CNG. Its 320-horsepower engine is 25 percent more powerful than a typical bus engine.

The lightweight, all-composite 45-foot 'CompoBus,' also manufactured by North American Bus Industries, is another advanced design. The vehicle has a lighter-weight, crash-resistant fiberglass composite body that is impervious to rust or corrosion. Both of these high-capacity vehicles will be placed into service on high demand corridors within Los Angeles County.

Metro's experience with CNG buses has been positive. While maintenance costs are typically 15-20 percent higher than diesel buses due to higher parts costs and increased maintenance requirements, Metro expects this price differential to decrease as diesel engines and exhaust systems require reconfiguration to meet increasingly stringent California Air Resources Board emission reduction rules.

"The California Air Resources Board is proud to partner with Metro to ensure that this new generation of buses is as clean as possible," said Bob Cross, Chief of the California Air Resources Board Mobile Source Control Division. "Together we are making great strides toward improving air quality, as well as meeting the diverse transportation needs of Southern California."

Metro is improving its bus system in other ways as well. This June Metro will add three more Metro Rapid Lines, bringing the total to 14. Metro plans to have 28 lines in operation by 2008.

The Metro Orange Line transitway, the agency's \$330 million regional transportation improvement project, will add another 14 miles of service on an exclusive transitway between the North Hollywood Metro Red Line Station and Warner Center in Woodland Hills.

The agency has invested more than \$100 million to improve communications on the bus system, which includes a new passenger stop announcement system.

It has also experimented with exclusive bus-only lanes and is working on ways to better coordinate service delivery with other carriers.

And within the last eight years, Metro has added 1.6 million annual service hours of bus service. The agency currently spends more than \$1 billion per year on bus operating and capital expenses, which represents nearly half its budget.

For more information on Metro programs, visit www.metro.net.

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