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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Metro Secures \$208 Million in State Funding for the Exposition Light Rail Transit Project**

- California Transportation Commission approves first of two state funding requests

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) today approved the allocation of \$208 million in Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funding for the Exposition Light Rail Transit Project that will provide a major source of funding to the project.

"We thank the CTC for recognizing the needs of Los Angeles and for approving our funding request for the Expo Line," said Los Angeles City Mayor and Metro Board Chairman Antonio Villaraigosa. "This funding helps keep the Expo Line on track. The CTC's continuing partnership with Los Angeles is vital to our efforts to grow our public transit system and reduce traffic congestion."

Last week, Metro officials had asked the CTC during their Southern California State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Public Hearing to fund the 8.5-mile Exposition Light Rail Project indicating it was critical that investment of state monies be allocated to the project.

"This is a critical project for our region," said County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, a member of Metro's Board of Directors. "When it's finished, the Exposition Light Rail Project has the potential to relieve some of the heavy traffic on the Santa Monica Freeway, which makes the CTC's allocation of these state dollars a win-win situation for all Westside commuters."

Construction on the line is expected to start this summer. The Exposition Light Rail Transit Project will share two stations (7th Street/Metro Center and Pico/Chick Hearn) with the Metro Blue Line in downtown Los Angeles where the line will then proceed west on the Metro-owned right-of-way on Exposition Boulevard, which parallels the congested I-10 Freeway with a terminus just east of Washington/National in Culver City.

Eight new stations will be constructed by the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority for a total project cost estimated at \$640 million. A second phase would extend the Exposition Line to the City of Santa Monica.

Metro is requesting a total of \$523 million from the CTC. This would include \$315 million in LA County's share of the 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and \$208 million in TCRP funding approved today.

The recent allocation of the \$208 million was committed by the state legislature and governor in June 2000, but the CTC has been unable to meet that commitment until now, due to the state's General Fund deficits. The CTC will take up Metro's request for the \$315 million at its April 27 meeting held in Fresno.

Metro officials expressed appreciation to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Los Angeles legislative delegation for their continued support for transportation improvements throughout the region.

The allocation of these state dollars will free up transportation monies from the previously established Exposition Line budget that could possibly fund projects such as transit projects and/or carpool lanes on the northbound I-405 Freeway over the Sepulveda Pass, I-5 Freeway from Route 170 to the 134 Freeway, and the I-10 Freeway from Puente to Citrus or other transportation improvements.

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