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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Metro Secures \$315 Million in State (Stip) Funding for the Exposition Light Rail Transit Project**

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) today approved the allotment of \$315 million in LA County's share of the 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding for the Exposition Light Rail Transit Project, providing a major source of funding to the project.

"We thank the CTC for their continued investment in Los Angeles and for approving our funding request for the Expo Line," said Los Angeles City Mayor and Metro Board Chairman Antonio Villaraigosa. "With this funding, we are one step closer to breaking ground on the Expo Line. The CTC's support is vital to our efforts to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and expand our public transportation system."

Last month, 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.

"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," said County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, a member of Metro's Board of Directors. "This is great news for the region."

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 requested a total of \$523 million from the CTC. This includes \$315 million in LA County's share of the 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) approved today and \$208 million in Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funding which were approved last month.

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 approved the additional \$315 million at its meeting today 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 allotment of these state dollars will free up transportation monies from the previously established Exposition Line budget that will fund numerous carpool lane segments such as those nearing construction on State Route 60 in the San Gabriel Valley and the Golden State and Santa Ana segments of Interstate 5 in the San Fernando Valley and Gateway Cities areas, respectively. The freed up funds could also possibly partially fund future planned projects such as transit projects and/or carpool lanes on the I-5 Freeway from Route 170 to the 134 Freeway, the northbound I-405 Freeway over the Sepulveda Pass, and the I-10 Freeway from Puente to Citrus or other transportation improvements.

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