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*"Dump Guzz For Us!"*

## **Metro, Metrolink Urge Commuters to End Relationship with Gas-guzzling Vehicles as Part of National 'Dump the Pump' Day**

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and Metrolink today urged L.A. County commuters to end their relationship with their gas-guzzling cars and trucks in favor of public transit, carpools and vanpools, all of which cost a fraction of the typical cost to drive a single passenger vehicle.

The Third Annual National "Dump the Pump" campaign, sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association, raises awareness of the financial and environmental benefits of public transportation and other ridesharing options for commuters seeking a permanent solution to the escalating cost of gasoline, now approaching \$5 a gallon in Southern California.

"Changing our commuting behavior is essential to our economic survival these days," said Pam O'Connor, Metro Board Chair. "We've reached the tipping point. All of us can save money and reduce our carbon footprint if we make a permanent commitment to limit our solo driving and switch to public transit and other ridesharing alternatives."

Total driving costs have risen as a result of record gasoline prices. According to the AAA's 2008 "Your Driving Costs" report, the average cost per mile to drive is now 54.1 cents per mile for a vehicle traveling 15,000 miles per year. A small sedan, for example, costs \$6,320 per year to drive, but a larger vehicle such as a mid-size SUV costs \$10,448 per year for the same distance traveled.

Public transit in Los Angeles County, by comparison, costs just \$744 per year regardless of amount of miles traveled. Ridesharing alternatives such as carpooling and vanpooling split commuting costs among a number of rideshare partners, which substantially reduces key driving costs such as gasoline, maintenance and tires. These reduced costs typically lower the price of commuting to between \$1,400 and \$2,200 per person per year.

A key strategy in reducing auto-related costs is replacing one car in a two or more car household with either public transit or ridesharing. According to the Southern California Associated Governments "State of the Commute Report," vehicle ownership regionwide is 2.5 vehicles per household. Simply reducing vehicle usage by one still retains a car for needed trips but saves families thousands of dollars per year for the other car, eliminating many — and possibly all — associated driving costs. Entire households can then be introduced to the cost-effective benefits of transit, ridesharing, bicycling, walking and other modal alternatives.

Record gasoline prices have rekindled interest in public transit and other rideshare options throughout Los Angeles County. Metro Rail ridership, for example, has jumped six percent from May 2007 to May 2008. It is one of the highest one month increases on record.

In March the Metro Red Line reached a seven-year high, with an average of 144,000 boardings during the weekday. Metro Gold Line ridership just reached a record 23,141 average weekday boardings in May. Other agency ridesharing programs, including carpool and vanpool programs, have seen a recent surge in public interest. Metro's Vanpool Program, for example, has registered more than 600 new vanpools in its first year of operation.

Metrolink provides commuter train service throughout the five-county region of Southern California. Its fast, direct rail services offer an easy and immediate transition for commuters seeking to reduce their driving costs. Train ridership has jumped five percent year-over-year. Ridership growth in June is expected to be in the double digits.

To meet growing demand, the agency will be adding new mid-day train services on the San Bernardino and Antelope Valley Lines this October, and has 107 new train cars on order.

“Demand for Metrolink service is at an historic high right now,” said Metrolink’s Assistant Executive Officer, Steve Wylie. “We are seeing a definite trend towards public transportation which is good for us, good for the community and good for the pocket book.”

The Automobile Club of Southern California recommends several additional ways in which commuters can reduce their driving costs further: adopt a smooth, even driving style and don’t going over the speed limit; accelerate and brake slowly, as driving style changes can save between 10 and 20 percent in fuel costs; check tire pressure at least monthly, as one in three vehicles has at least one underinflated tire which wastes gas, and; use the household vehicle with the best fuel economy whenever possible.

“These small changes can make a big difference in your fuel bills,” said Steve Finnegan, manager of government affairs and public policy.

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