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Contacts: John Goodwin, MTC 510.464.7862
Teresa Lee, Air District 415.749.4900

FREE MORNING COMMUTES ON SPARE THE AIR DAYS THIS SUMMER ***MTC, Air District, 21 Transit Partners Unite to "Spare the Air" This Summer***

SAN FRANCISCO, May 26, 2005 – Expanding on last year’s highly successful Spare the Air/BART promotion, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) announced this morning at a press conference at SBC Park that they are partnering with 21 transit operators across nine Bay Area counties to offer riders a **free morning commute during the first five non-holiday weekday “Spare the Air” days.**

Beginning June 1, free morning commutes will be offered the first five times the Air District issues a “Spare the Air” advisory on a non-holiday weekday. Passengers on various Bay Area transit operators, including BART, MUNI, AC Transit, VTA, Golden Gate Transit, ACE, SamTrans, Caltrain and ferries, can take advantage of the free rides if they enter a participating station or terminal between 4 a.m. and 9 a.m. All transit partners will collect fares as usual for rides beginning after 9 a.m. The promotion ends on October 14, 2005. The \$3.9 million in funding for the free morning commute program is available from the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program.

“Through this unprecedented initiative, our mass transportation partners are proving that the Bay Area is deeply committed to improving air quality,” said the Air District’s Executive Officer Jack Broadbent. “Air pollution is a serious public health issue. I encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity and take transit on “Spare the Air” days. Motor vehicles are the Bay Area’s number one source of air pollution,” Broadbent said.

Last year, five free morning commutes on BART were offered to Bay Area residents on “Spare the Air” days. Based on the increased BART ridership and the continued commitment to improving air quality, the Air District and MTC expanded the pilot program this year to both reduce Bay Area smog on the most impacted days and to protect billions of transportation dollars.

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Free Morning Commutes on Spare the Air Days (continued)

The Air District declares a “Spare the Air” day when it expects air pollution to reach unhealthy concentrations, which typically occur on hot, windless days. “Spare the Air” advisories are issued the afternoon before a “Spare the Air” day and are well publicized through media outlets, employers and the AirAlerts network. The public can receive advance notification of “Spare the Air” days by registering for “AirAlerts” at www.sparetheair.org. To learn more about the “Free Morning Commute” promotion or to plan your trip on transit, visit www.511.org.

The following Bay Area transit partners are participating in the “Free Morning Commute” initiative:

- ACE
- AC Transit
- Alameda Harbor Bay Ferry
- Alameda/Oakland Ferry
- BART
- Benicia Transit
- Caltrain
- County Connection
- Emery Go Round
- Golden Gate Transit
- LAVTA/Wheels
- MUNI
- Napa County VINE
- Petaluma Transit
- SamTrans
- Santa Rosa CityBus
- Sonoma County Transit
- Tri Delta Transit
- Union City Transit
- WestCAT
- VTA

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area.

MTC (www.mtc.ca.gov) is the transportation planning, coordinating and financing agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

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