



**For Immediate Release
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“FREE FARE” COMMUTES ALL DAY ON SPARE THE AIR DAYS
MTC, Air District, 24 Transit Partners Unite to “Spare the Air” This Summer

SAN FRANCISCO, May 31, 2006 – Expanding last year’s highly successful free morning commute promotion, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) announced this afternoon at a press conference on Treasure Island that they are partnering with 24 transit operators across nine Bay Area counties to offer riders a **“Free Fare” commute during the first three non-holiday “Spare the Air” weekdays. New this year, free rides will be offered all day.**

Beginning June 1, free all-day commutes will be offered the first three times the Air District issues a “Spare the Air” advisory on a non-holiday weekday. Passengers on various Bay Area transit systems, including Muni, BART, AC Transit, VTA, Golden Gate Transit, ACE, SamTrans, Caltrain and ferries, can take advantage of the free rides during regular hours of operation. The promotion ends on October 13, 2006. The total amount of funding for this project is \$7.5 million dollars, including \$6.7 million from the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program and \$870,000 in Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA)/Air District funding.

“We are pleased to expand our highly successful free transit program, the largest program of its kind in the nation,” said Air District Executive Officer Jack Broadbent. “Motor vehicles are the Bay Area’s number one source of air pollution, so taking transit on “Spare the Air” days helps protect public health and the environment.”

Last year, a free morning commute on 21 transit partners was offered to Bay Area residents on the single weekday “Spare the Air” of the season, July 26, 2005. “Based on increased ridership and the continued commitment to improve air quality, the Air District and MTC expanded the program this year to encourage more residents to lessen their dependence on motor vehicles,” said Metropolitan Transportation Commission Executive Director Steve Heminger.

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 “Spare the Air/Free Fare” promotion or to plan your trip on transit, visit www.511.org.

The following Bay Area transit partners are participating in the “Spare the Air/Free Fare” initiative:

- Muni
- ACE
- AC Transit
- Alameda-Oakland Ferry
- Alameda-Harbor Bay Ferry
- BART
- Benicia Breeze
- Caltrain
- County Connection
- Dumbarton Express
- Fairfield/Suisun Transit
- Golden Gate Transit and Ferries
- Livermore-Amador Valley Transit Authority (WHEELS)
- Petaluma Transit
- Rio Vista Breeze
- SamTrans
- Santa Rosa CityBus
- Sonoma County Transit
- Tri Delta Transit
- Union City Transit
- Vacaville City Coach
- Napa VINE
- VTA
- WestCat

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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