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Gray Davis
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TO: All California Transit Agencies

The Air Resources Board (ARB or Board) adopted the Urban Transit Bus Fleet Rule (title 13, California Code of Regulations, section 1956.2 et seq.) in February 2000. That rule defines an urban bus as the following [13 CCR §1956.2 (b)(4)]:

“Urban bus” means a passenger-carrying vehicle powered by a heavy heavy-duty diesel engine, or of a type normally powered by a heavy heavy-duty diesel engine, with a load capacity of fifteen (15) or more passengers and intended primarily for intra-city operation, i.e., within the confines of a city or greater metropolitan area. Urban bus operation is characterized by short rides and frequent stops. To facilitate this type of operation, more than one set of quick-operating entrance and exit doors would normally be installed. Since fares are usually paid in cash or token, rather than purchased in advance in the form of tickets, urban buses would normally have equipment installed for the collection of fares. Urban buses are also typically characterized by the absence of equipment and facilities for long distance travel, e.g., restrooms, large luggage compartments, and facilities for stowing carry-on luggage.

The ARB has been asked to clarify whether or not buses used on certain types of commuter routes would be exempt from this definition. These commuter routes are characterized by passenger pick-ups, usually in one county, and drop-offs, usually in another county, in the morning, with a return commute in the evening. The ARB would like to provide some guidance to transit agencies regarding classification of buses used on these types of routes.

The definition, as quoted above, was designed to capture transit bus operation within metropolitan areas, and exclude charter and other over-the-road buses that exist for long distance transportation and tourism. Buses used on routes that operate within metropolitan areas, that have more than one or a few stops at the pick-up and drop-off locations (even if passengers cannot get on at one stop and exit a few blocks away), and are designed to move commuters between homes and work, would be classified as urban buses.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Website: <http://www.arb.ca.gov>.

California Environmental Protection Agency

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The U.S. Census Bureau defines metropolitan areas according to published standards. Census Bureau definitions should be used to determine if commuter routes operate within a metropolitan area. For example, the Sacramento-Yolo metropolitan area (or CMSA) includes the counties of Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer, and Yolo, thus commuter routes that operate between those counties would be considered to be within the confines of a single metropolitan area. Similarly, routes that operate between the counties of Contra Costa and San Francisco would be within the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose Metropolitan area.

If you have any questions about this communication, please contact Dr. Nancy Steele, manager, Retrofit Implementation, at (626) 350-6598, or nsteele@arb.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

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Robert H. Cross, Chief
Mobile Source Control Division