

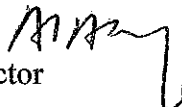


Potomac and Rappahannock  
Transportation Commission

14700 Potomac Mills Road  
Woodbridge, VA 22192

September 4, 2008

TO: Chairman Jones and Commissioners

FROM: Alfred H. Harf   
Executive Director

RE: Roadworthiness of PRTC's Contingency Fleet Buses

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In the course of presenting the "fuel price run-up coping" plan that the Board provisionally approved on July 17<sup>th</sup>, I referenced the fact that PRTC is moving over-aged buses in PRTC's "contingency fleet" to the active fleet to respond to the continuing ridership surge. That prompted Commissioner Caddigan to ask about the accumulated mileage on each of the "contingency fleet" buses by way of questioning their roadworthiness. I replied that roadworthiness is more a matter of how well the buses have been maintained and whether engines and power train components are being properly looked after, and I pledged to furnish additional information in response to this question. I also indicated that 300,000 miles is an important engine-related measure because PRTC -- First Transit contract uses 300,000 miles as a "division of responsibility" determinant -- if an engine, transmission, or differential has to be replaced having logged fewer than 300,000 miles, it is First Transit's responsibility to bear the expense, while PRTC bears the expense for those that have logged more than 300,000 miles. This threshold was incorporated into the request for proposals (RFP) and the contract as another mechanism for safeguarding the fleet, since the contractor is in the position of "reaping what it sows."

The attached table lists the twelve over-aged buses PRTC has and a summary of the engine/power train investments made on each. The nine newest of these twelve buses are in the active fleet, necessitated by the PRTC policy aim of averting chronic overcrowding, so the "contingency fleet" is confined at the present time to three buses, all 1989-vintage. Once the new buses the Commission authorized for purchase at the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting arrive (the first two before the end of the calendar year), the new buses will be placed into the active fleet and the oldest of the over-aged buses will be moved back into the "contingency fleet", ready to be deployed again if necessary.

As the tabular summary shows, the engines have been replaced in all the over-aged buses except the four 1995-vintage buses (which are the newest of the over-aged buses). For those that have had engine replacements, all have logged well under 300,000 miles since the replacement,

Chairman Jones and Commissioners

September 4, 2008

Page 2

while all four 1995-vintage buses still have their original engines and have logged significantly more miles than 300,000 each. Thus the replacement of the engines on the four 1995-vintage buses will be PRTC's cost to bear, and we have planned for that in our budgeting<sup>1</sup>.

In short, all of these buses continue to be roadworthy, though they are not going to be mistaken for a new bus ride quality-wise<sup>2</sup>. The Commission can be assured that safety is paramount, and no bus is ever knowingly placed into service if it is not roadworthy, whether it is over-aged or otherwise.

Management would be pleased to answer any further questions about this at the September meeting.

Attachment: As stated

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<sup>1</sup> Our long-standing practice has been to replace the engines at such time as they fail rather than doing it on a programmed basis, because we know they are not all going to fail at once and therefore we don't need to worry about being short fleet-wise on account of engine replacements. That long-standing practice has served us well because we didn't have large numbers of buses with the same vintage approaching the point where engine failures could be expected, but that practice will be changed when it comes time for the mid-life overhaul of the 2002-vintage MCI buses since we have 38 of those. Our formative thinking for those is to replace the engines on a programmed basis (ideally at the time of the mid-life overhaul).

<sup>2</sup> The 1993 and 1995 buses also have the benefit of mid-life overhauls performed in 2004 and 2006, respectively. While they are in the active fleet as noted, they are designated as spares meaning that they are used in service less often and consequently are accumulating miles more slowly. While the 1989-vintage buses in the contingency fleet did not have mid-life overhauls (because when it would have been time for such overhauls, the thinking was not as it is presently), routine preventive maintenance services have been performed on a continuing basis so management knows these buses are still roadworthy if they have to be pressed into service.

Bus No.	Year	Current Mileage	Bus Type	Engine Replacement Date	Engine Replacement Mileage	Transmission Replacement Date	Transmission Replacement Mileage	Differential Replacement Date
109	1989	450,324	RTS	3/9/2000	433,045	6/22/2000		
111	1989	421,701	RTS	10/21/2002	406,985			3/24/1999
112	1989	453,256	RTS			8/16/1999 10/31/2001		10/15/1999
142	1993	526,625	MCI	10/21/2002	432,103			
				1/17/2000	314,103			
				2/15/2008	518,377	4/5/2001		
143	1993	507,092	MCI	12/1/1998				
				8/27/2002	420,475	1/11/2001		
				6/16/2008	505,948			
144	1993	520,710	MCI	3/8/2002		3/8/2002		
				11/18/2002	403,259	11/8/2002		
						2/10/2004	442,946	
145	1993	526,089	MCI	5/18/1999	286,098	7/6/2001		
						4/28/2004	401,330	
146	1993	493,534	MCI	1/11/2001	325,291			
147	1995	423,464	MCI			3/16/2000		
						10/21/2003	319,100	
148	1995	404,111	MCI			5/25/1999		
						10/14/2003	309,750	
149	1995	436,760	MCI			4/20/2001		
150	1995	397,672	MCI			1/22/2004	3,507	