

PEOPLE ORGANIZING TO DEMAND  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS



EL PUEBLO ORGANIZANDOSE PARA DEMANDAR  
DERECHOS AMBIENTALES Y ECONÓMICOS

February 19th, 2008

Peter Strauss, Julie Kirschbaum, Peter Albert  
Municipal Transportation Agency  
One South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Ms Kirshbaum, Mr Straus, and Mr Albert:

PODER has been gathering information about the health impacts of concentrated pollution from traffic in South East San Francisco. We are developing a Health Impact Assessment together with the Department of Public Health and UC Berkeley School of Public Health. Based on traffic counts, air sampling, community surveys, and health data in our community, our research shows that community residents are over exposed to diesel pollution, much of it coming from buses and trucks traveling through the South East.

Based upon data we received from Julie Kirschbaum of the MTA, the majority of MUNI routes in South East San Francisco continue to deploy diesel buses. We understand that MUNI has begun to deploy newer hybrid vehicles on routes served by the Woods Division; however when we stood on street corners with community volunteers to monitor traffic we saw a majority of diesel buses even on lines that MUNI reported as having hybrid service.

The recently passed Proposition A requires the Municipal Transportation Agency to reduce overall emissions that cause air pollution. We believe that the Metropolitan Transportation Agency should go one step further to reduce emissions in the communities that are historically over burdened by high levels of pollution. Hybrid vehicles should be prioritized for the communities that are most impacted by pollution and where residents experience long term health problems as a result of that pollution. The top killers in our community are heart problems, lung problems, and cancer, all of which are affected by exposure to pollution.

Given our concerns, we would appreciate your help in addressing the following questions: 1) What is the MTA's policy regarding which MUNI routes deploy hybrid vehicles? 2) What operations changes could be proposed to maximize hybrid vehicles for the routes that serve South East San Francisco? 3) Could the MTA develop a policy to prioritize current and future hybrid vehicles in communities that are overburdened by pollution and experience related health effects?

We would appreciate a meeting with you to address these concerns and invite you to come to PODER to meet with our members and develop solutions to these issues.

Sincerely,

Charlie Sciammas for PODER

cc  
Nathaniel Ford, Sr, Executive Director  
Kenneth McDonald, Director of Service Delivery & Operations  
MTA Board of Directors  
Rafael Cabrera, Transport Workers Union

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