

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Clean Air Express Fare Increase

MEETING DATE: May 15, 2003

AGENDA ITEM: 11

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Receive summary of public comments received regarding the proposed Clean Air Express fare increase.
- B. Adopt a resolution approving a Clean Air Express fare increase from \$100 per month to \$130 per month effective July 1, 2003. (Attachment A).

DISCUSSION:

As was discussed at the April Board meeting, SBCAG staff recommends that the CAE monthly fare be raised to respond to rising operating costs and an imminent decrease in revenues for the CAE program. At the April meeting, the Board approved a resolution adopting a policy for receiving public comments regarding proposed Clean Air Express (CAE) fare increases or service revisions. In accordance with the fare policy, SBCAG distributed notices to current CAE subscribers and held a public meeting on Wednesday, April 30, 2003 to gather input on the proposed fare increase. Public notices were placed in the Santa Maria Times and the Lompoc Record notifying the public of the proposed fare increase and the public meeting. After reviewing the public comments, SBCAG staff is recommending that the Board adopt a resolution approving the CAE fare increase from \$100 per month to \$130 per month.

Need for a \$30 Fare Increase: Staff has examined both the short term and long term financial outlook for the CAE. In the long term, it is clear that a new source of transit subsidy will be needed in order to continue operating the CAE after 2005. In the short term, a budget shortfall is projected in FY 2004-2005. Although the farebox will likely never generate enough revenue to pay for 100% of the operating costs, farebox revenue constitutes the largest source of revenue to offset the costs of operating the CAE. Historically the CAE farebox revenue has been supplemented with APCD funds, however, due to budget constraints the APCD has only committed to one more year of funding for the CAE. During the next two years, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) federal funds will also be available to help offset the increased costs associated with the planned service expansion. Staff projections indicate that even with the CMAQ revenue, the CAE program will see a revenue shortfall of \$235,000 by the end of FY 2004-2005 if the CAE fares remain at the current \$100 rate. It is for this reason that a fare increase is recommended. A \$30 fare increase will generate enough revenue to pay for the

projected shortfall and ensure that the CAE program will continue to have sufficient funding to operate over the next two years.

It has been six years since fares were raised. CAE fares were originally set at \$75 in 1991. Since then, the fares have been raised twice to its current \$100 rate. Although a \$30 fare increase represents a 30% increase over the current fare, when averaged over the past six years, the fare increase equates to an average annual increase of 4.7%, which is slightly lower than the historical average annual fare increase of 4.9%. Clearly, it would have been more desirable to implement more modest fare increases over the last six years from the perspective of some subscribers, but it could also be argued that subscribers have benefited from the fact that the fare has not been increased for six years.

Summary of Public Comments: CAE Subscribers and the general public were given an opportunity to submit their comments in person at the public meeting, by letter, by phone or by email. Twenty-two out of the 379 current riders submitted comments regarding the fare increase. Twenty comments made by twenty-one riders were received via email (as of May 5). One comment was received in person and three comments were received at the noticed public meeting.

Comments were received from residents of Lompoc and Buellton. No comments were received from residents of Santa Maria. Comments were received from riders on 6 of the 8 existing routes. The Table 1 summarizes the written comments and oral testimony received as of May 5, 2003 (Note: Some individuals commented on more than one issue, thus there are 46 comments from 22 commenters). Attachment B is a summary of the April 30, 2003 public meeting. Also attached are copies of the written comments received via email.

Table 1: Summary of Comments

Increase is due/understandable	8
Opposed to \$30 increase	11
Good/Great Service/Program	7
Distance-Based Rates	7
Increase should be phased in	8
Concern over end of APCD subsidy/CAE should receive transit funding	5

Addressing Pubic Comments:

Fare Increase Phasing: The primary concern conveyed by the subscribers was not so much that the fares would be raised, but that they would be raised by \$30 at one time. Several of the subscribers suggested that the fare increase should be phased in over time. In response to these comments, staff developed two alternative phasing scenarios. The first assumes a fare increase of \$15 in July, 2003 and another \$15 increase in January, 2004. The second scenario assumes a fare increase of \$15 in July, 2003 and another \$15 increase in July, 2004. While

these scenarios address some of the comments made by the subscribers, both phasing options would result in a FY 2004-2005 budget shortfall ranging from \$20,000 to \$54,000. Table 2 shows the financial implications of these scenarios.

Table 2: Fare Increase Phasing Scenarios (two-year horizon through FY '04-'05)

Operating Revenue	No Fare Increase	July '03 - \$115 July '04 - \$130	July '03 - \$115 Jan. '04 - \$130	July '03 - \$130
APCD	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000
CMAQ	\$ 384,000	\$ 384,000	\$ 384,000	\$ 384,000
Farebox	\$ 932,300	\$1,137,000	\$1,171,000	\$1,201,000
Total Revenue	\$1,476,300	\$1,681,000	\$1,715,000	\$1,745,000
Total Expenditures	\$1,735,000	\$1,735,000	\$1,735,000	\$1,735,000
Shortfall	(\$258,700)	(\$54,000)	(\$20,000)	\$10,000

The primary goal of the fare increase is to ensure that the CAE is financially sustainable over the next two years. Neither of the two phasing scenarios meet this goal. For this reason a phased approach is not recommended. However, in order to reduce the financial impact of the fare increase, subscribers could be given the opportunity to purchase an unlimited number of monthly passes in advance at the current \$100 rate until June 25, 2003.

Distance-Based Fare Structure: Another suggestion conveyed by several of the Buellton subscribers was to implement a distance-based fare structure. A distance-based fare structure would be more equitable to Buellton subscribers, however, extending a lower fare to Buellton subscribers could be perceived as inequitable to other subscribers that travel similar distances. Currently there are six different distances traveled by CAE subscribers:

Trip Origin and Destination	Approximate Round Trip Distance
Santa Maria to Santa Barbara:	144 miles
Santa Maria to Goleta:	128 miles
Lompoc to Santa Barbara:	108 miles
Lompoc to Goleta:	92 miles
Buellton to Santa Barbara:	88 miles
Buellton to Goleta:	72 miles

If a lower fare were extended to Buellton subscribers, logically, Lompoc to Goleta subscribers would also be charged an equivalent fare. However, once a lower fare is extended to Lompoc to Goleta passengers, the bus operators and SBCAG staff would need to track and enforce the origin and destination of each of the CAE passengers. This would be more time consuming and expensive to administer.

Distance-based fares are also more difficult to market. Many of the CAE marketing messages contain the price. Adding a multiple price fare structure would complicate the marketing message. Furthermore, SBCAG is currently exploring strategies to simplify the existing 0subscription-based format. Under the current subscription system, passengers are limited to one specific CAE route and schedule. Many of the CAE passengers would chose to take an alternate bus periodically if given the option to do so. To provide this flexibility, SBCAG may

convert to a single, non-route specific CAE pass system. A single pass system would not be possible under a multiple distance-based fare system.

Only 15 out of the 365 CAE passengers are Buellton residents. When the MTD Santa Ynez bus service is implemented in 2004, it is anticipated that many of these subscribers will switch to the MTD bus service as it will likely be less expensive and more flexible than the CAE. It does not make sense to create a more expensive and complex fare structure for a small minority of the passengers especially when these passengers are likely to choose another alternative. For this reason it is not recommended that a distance-based fare structure be implemented at this time.

Recommendation: The CAE is a very productive transit system that meets commuting needs for many North County residents and reduces auto trips. It is critical to ensure the financial viability of the CAE program. A \$30 fare increase will bring financial stability to the program through FY 2004-2005. While a \$30 fare increase is significant, it is consistent with past fare increases for the CAE. Staff recognizes that a \$30 fare increase will result in a decrease in subscribers. However, since a \$130 fare is still far more economical than driving alone, it is anticipated that the CAE will continue to attract a strong patronage. In order to ensure the CAE operates through FY 2004-2005 and to bring current fares inline with rising operating costs, it is recommended that the Board adopt a resolution raising the CAE fares from \$100 to \$130 effective July 1, 2003.

COMMITTEE REVIEW: None

STAFF CONTACT: Kent Epperson (961-8917)

ATTACHMENTS: A: Resolution for raising the monthly CAE fare from \$100 to \$130 effective July 1, 2003.

B: Summary of comments received at the April 30, 2003 CAE fare increase public meeting and copies of written comments received via email.

ATTACHMENT A

RESOLUTION OF THE SANTA BARBARA
COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

FARE INCREASE FOR THE)
CLEAN AIR EXPRESS)
_____))
03-13

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments manages the operation of the Clean Air Express which provides intercommunity transit service between north Santa Barbara County and the Santa Barbara County south coast; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments is a recipient of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds administered by the Federal Transit Administration for the procurement of transit vehicles for and operation of the Clean Air Express; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments has a need to periodically revise the fare structure and modify routes and schedules for the Clean Air Express; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments has adopted a policy for receiving public comments for fare increases and major service reductions as required by the Federal Transit Administration; and

WHEREAS, notices were distributed to the current Clean Air Express subscribers regarding the proposed fare increase, and a publicly noticed public meeting was held on April 30, 2003 to receive public comments on the proposed Clean Air Express fare increase; and

WHEREAS, public comments received have been reviewed and considered by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments prior to implementing a fare increase; and

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED THAT the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments as the managing agency for the Clean Air Express approves a fare increase from \$100 per month to \$130 per month effective July 1, 2003.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 15th day of May, 2003 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

Jim Kemp
Executive Director

Laurence Lavagnino, Chair
Santa Barbara County
Association of Governments

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

By
Kevin E. Ready, Sr.
Deputy County Counsel

ATTACHMENT B

CLEAN AIR EXPRESS PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

APRIL 30, 2003

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.

STAFF ATTENDANCE: Jim Kemp, Kent Epperson, Scott Spaulding, Debbie Barber, Kim Gillian.

Jim Kemp introduced the proposed fare increase that was advertised and noticed in the newspapers. He said the proposed increase would go up from \$100 to \$130. He requested that everyone attending the meeting sign in.

Mr. Kemp said that SBCAG took over the Clean Air Express (CAE) one and one-half years ago from the APCD. The initial pilot program was moved to an operational program. He said that there was a need to determine the long term viability of the program. He said the program has been useful for reducing emissions and congestion and lowering commuting costs. He explained that there were plans to improve and expand the service by purchasing new buses. He said he believes that the SBCAG Board is committed to the program since they approved a last minute subsidy to balance the FY 02-03 budget.

Scott Spaulding stated that the goal was to improve and continue the program. He said that the funding sources included the fare box, APCD subsidy and a federal subsidy. He said that there had not been a fare increase for over six years and that this was one of the best ways to augment funding. He said that some were shocked at a 30 percent increase but in order to maintain the program fares need to generate the majority of the financial support for the program. He referred to the handout showing the historical fares. Scott said that this was still a very competitive program versus driving yourself to work. He said the goal of the program was to continue to operate it.

Sharon Krummerich, a Lompoc rider, said that they were going to price themselves right out of it and that thirty dollars was exorbitant and that they might lose riders. She said she did not know if she could afford that amount.

Scott Spaulding stated that SBCAG made up the shortfall this year but could not afford to continue to do so.

Jim Kemp said that the APCD subsidy was going to disappear and that it would need to be made up somewhere. He said that transit systems don't operate exclusively from fares and must be subsidized but that would amount to less than driving oneself daily.

Bill Yim, a Ventura Coastal Express rider, stated he used to be a long time Clean Air Express transit rider and realized a substantial financial benefit from doing so, especially with rising fuel costs. He said he supported the increase even though he now

rides the Coastal Express instead of the CAE. He said there may be an initial reduction in ridership but that he felt they would return.

Janice Robinson, a Lompoc rider, said that she had been riding the CAE since 1991 and that it bothered her that staff was making decisions for others even though they don't use the service themselves. She requested that the increase be phased in instead of all at once. She said that ridership dropped after SBCAG took it over. She said she would go for convenience if it's equal in cost, but if saving money means taking the bus she would do so. She said that even the riders that are subsidized complain about riding the bus. APCD doesn't give their employees a subsidy. She asked about a way to get around having bus passes. She said the use of passes holds up the bus and must cost a lot of money. She stated that it would be nice to pay when you get on the bus like it used to be done. You would give the driver a check and he would pass out the passes.

Scott Spaulding said that producing the pass and mailing it amounts to \$1 per month per subscriber.

Sharon Krummerich said that buying passes on the bus didn't hold up the bus too much.

Kent Epperson said that he knew that the \$30 increase per month was significant. He said that they had considered phasing it in but they would be short in the budget by \$30,000 by doing so. He said if there were another source of money they wouldn't be doing this or if subscribership went up this could also change the financial picture.

Sharon Krummerich asked if there would be a new bus to the new SBCAG/APCD building because the current bus was on a different schedule.

Scott Spaulding said that he would be looking into this. He said the bus already goes to the new building and that they were sensitive to tailoring routes to the needs of individuals.

Kent Epperson said that a transit plan would be developed in the next few months to look at routing issues as well as to develop a plan to raise fares over the long term to prevent infrequent large fare increases such as this one.

Janice Robinson asked if the CAE was being overbooked.

Scott Spaulding responded sometimes and that they need to be careful with this.

Sharon and Janice stated that the UCSB would not let people on. She asked why to bother running to catch a bus when they close the doors in your face.

Linda Beard, a Lompoc Rider asked Bill Yim how much it cost to ride the Coastal Express.

Mr. Yim responded \$75.

Kent Epperson said that SBCAG was not a transit operator and therefore was not eligible for certain federal funding. He said that they could not make ends meet and that a fare increase was not certain yet. He said the proposed fare increase would be considered at the SBCAG Board meeting on May 15th and that the new fares would become effective July 1st if approved. He said that they will allow passengers to purchase passes for future months at the \$100 level if this is done prior to July 1.

Janice asked what was being done to become more eligible for funding.

Jim Kemp responded that the county receives a certain amount of money for transit funding so our Board would need to approve the reallocation of money from other transit agencies to give it to the CAE.

Linda asked if they had considered how many more cars would be back on the road if the CAE was not running.

Bill Yim said relative to other fare increases they had not been given the opportunity to share their opinions. He said the CAE was operated much more professional now and that it was good riders could comment on the fare increases. He said that the CAE is a good program that benefits a lot of people and putting it back together would be difficult.

Janice stated that CAE accidents had been reduced as a result of the recent change of administration.

Jim Kemp said that he knew that the riders appreciate the overall service and that the Board needed to hear this also.

Linda Beard asked that everything possible be done to find funding to offset the cost to riders, especially for those people forced to commute because of housing prices or where the office is located.

Janice Robinson said that you can take the MTD for free if you work downtown. She asked SBCAG to consider giving bus passes on the CAE as a perk. She said that Francis received a free MTD bus pass. APCD gives two days vacation to employees who commute 4 days per week.

Scott Spaulding said that SBCAG was considering asking employers to give CAE bus passes as perks.

Jim Kemp closed the meeting at 12:52 p.m. He said that the proposed fare increase would be presented to the Board at its May meeting.

**CAE Proposed Fare Increase
Subscriber Comments Submitted Via Email**

Some comments:

1. It may be more effective to adjust the rate based on the mileage of the commute. A rider from Santa Maria should pay more than a rider from Buellton because the commuting costs are higher.
2. I understand that there is waiting list to get on the bus, but we always have several seats empty. Typically it is from 8 to 12 empty seats. Overbook the bus! Make sure that the passes state which route that the rider is signed up for. If they elect to take a different bus, it will be on a standby basis.
3. A 5% rate increase every year is easier for riders to manage than a 30% increase every 6 years.
4. Why is the bus more expensive than a van pool?
5. Before you make the change, you may want to do a survey and find out how many riders you will lose. Then you can decide if it is worth it.

Brad Ross, Buellton route

I have been riding the CAE for 8 years and agree that a fare increase is due. However, I am concerned about a 30% increase especially since many of us who work for government agencies are also facing salary cuts in the form of unpaid work furloughs. I would like SBCAG to consider increasing the fare to \$115 in July 2003 and then to \$130 in July 2004.

Thank you,
Nancy A. Dion
Santa Barbara Superior Court
Criminal Division, Calendar Coordinator
ndion@sbcourts.org

Seems to me that there has been some mis-management with the Clean Air Express and now the customers are going to have to pay for it. If the cost of providing transit service has been increasing over the last six years then the fare should have been slowly increasing to reflect these costs and I am sure the customers would have all understood that. Nothing stays the same. But to increase the from \$100 to \$130 in one shot is pretty hard to swallow. Increase of \$360 a year!! I understand that we are to get new buses in 2004.. Will the fare go up again to help cover the cost of that too?? I am sorry but I am not sure I can continue to with your service.. Gas prices are falling and I do have an economic car along with a motorcycle that I love to ride... I can turn a 12 hour day (time walking to and waiting for bus) into a 10 hour day just by getting myself to work and probably save money too at the rate you guys are going..... \$130 a month is about \$6.00 a day to ride the bus. I can get myself to work alot cheaper than that plus save 2 hours a day of wasted time,....

I would support a gradual increase over time... Somewhere from 5-10% a year would be fair to start...

Rick Lee
Raytheon
x2521

To the SBCAG board meeting about the proposed fare increase,

I am one of a group of people who live in the Santa Ynez Valley area and ride your bus from Goleta to Buellton, not to Santa Maria. Therefore, I don't think that my group should pay the same amount for your service that the Santa Maria people do, as they go another 30-35 miles farther than we do.

[submitted by Thomas G Martinek]

30% increase seems a bit high. I understand you haven't increased it in a long time so maybe a smaller increase over the course of a few years would be a better plan.

[submitted by Peggy Van Hook]

A proposal for a fare increase effective July 1, 2003 was expected, but a 30% increase is unreasonable. It is understood that costs increase, but gas prices are beginning to go down (and will continue to) and \$30.00 more monthly is too much to expect each individual to pay. \$10.00 monthly, increasing our cost to \$110.00 monthly, is much more reasonable.

The bus is a wonderful resource for those of us who are required to commute, but we pay the same monthly fee regardless of days, weeks or even months away, or if the bus use is only for part-time work. Also, many of us can't ride the bus everyday due to changing work hours which require us to periodically drive.

It is noted that the APCD may not continue contributions after 2004, and more consideration may be necessary at that time.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Phil von Phul
route 103

SBCAG/Clean Air Express,

This is in response to the proposed rate hike. I really oppose the rate hike! I live in Lompoc and commute to Santa Barbara. The current rate is reasonable and fits in my budget. I do enjoy the service, but you are asking a lot in raising the rate by \$30.00.

If you increase your rates you will inevitably lose a lot of customers! A lot of people like myself have a limited budget, and can't afford a higher rate. Please take this information into consideration when making your decision.

A Clean Air Bus Customer,
Jorge Rocha

I have been a rider for several years now and although I appreciate the fact that the fare has not been increased over the years, there has been an effective fare increase for me. I live in Santa Ynez and I have seen the bus service change from a pick up in Santa Ynez to a pick up in Solvang to a pick up in Buellton, significantly increasing the distance that I have to drive to the bus stop.

Furthermore, I think that the rider fees should be pro-rated based on distance. I currently pay the same fee for a Buellton pick-up as my co-workers pay for a Santa Maria pick-up, roughly twice the distance to our work in Goleta. Since it costs more to run the bus to Santa Maria and

back (instead of it staying in Buellton overnight), it appears to me that I am subsidizing the Santa Maria riders with my fare payment. Additionally, the Santa Maria riders receive a larger subsidy from our employer than the Buellton riders, thereby further increasing the disparity between what the Buellton riders pay and what the Santa Maria riders pay. The fares should be based on distance to be fair.

Paul A Drake
Senior Principal Engineer
805.562.4639
805.562.2363 fax
805.897.7393 pager
pdrake@raytheon.com

Re: the proposed fare raise to ride the commuter bus. I ride the bus that starts in Santa Maria at 05:55 and picks us up in Buellton at 6:30. It is a great way to get to work. The fare raise seems like quite a bit at one time, tho' I do understand the need to do it, considering the sad state of affairs this state is in. The proposed hike in fare would be much easier for people on the bus to accept if we could be assured that we would get one of the new buses. We have had the dregs of the fleet; crowded seats, bad tires, unreliable, poor lights for reading, for a long time.

My sincere hope is to see a new bus along with the new fare.
Sincerely, Susan Warner

Thank you for the notice of the proposed increase to \$130 per month. It seems reasonable and somewhat competitive with the van pools.

You mentioned that the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) funding is not expected to continue after 2004.

So, for planning purposes for 2004, what would a possible fare be without the (APCD) funding?

ken bredy

First of all you are having a meeting in Goleta. All of us whom ride the bus would not be able to make it to the meeting because we do not have the transportation. Will Clean Air Express provide transportation to go to Goleta to attend the meeting?

I have to say, it has been nice to just pay the \$100 per month for the past six years. But I really feel to go and raise the monthly fare by \$30 is asking a lot. That is \$360 more a year. Would you consider upping the fare \$10. That would be more reasonable and I'm sure a lot of riders would agree with that. There are some riders that don't make a whole lot of money and that can be a hardship on some.

I would like very much for my concerns and comment to be brought up at the board meeting.

Ruth Page
Lompoc Rider Bus #103

I feel that a 30 percent increase in the Clean Air Express Fee is pretty unreasonable. I would be willing to accept a 10 percent increase without question.

I question the need for new buses. I currently ride on Air 12 from Lompoc and feel it is a comfortable bus. Air 12 is a big improvement over the bus I rode on about 5 years ago when I lived in Santa Maria. When Melni ran the program, the buses were junk heaps. The one I rode on actually leaked in the rain.

Have you considered how many people may decide to carpool instead of riding the bus with this large of a fare increase? Riding the bus isn't all that convenient. All the stops make for a very long day. To make the program attractive, you need to keep the cost very low.

Andy Jagoda

To Whom It May Concern:

I'd like to say that the proposed 30% fare increase is outrageous. Wages have not increased that much over the past 10 years, in fact my salary only increases by 5% every 2 years. I could understand a 10% increase and even encourage a 5% increase but I certainly feel a 30% increase is unjustified and unreasonable. I would hope that the SBCAG would look at this proposed increase a little more realistically and think about the people who are riding the bus in order to reduce air pollution and save money. This increase would almost make it cost effective to drive again.

Thank You,
Janice Jones
801 East Cypress Avenue
Lompoc CA 93436
(805) 740-0427

Marine Science Institute
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106
(805) 893-7061

I think a 30% increase is excessive. Gas prices are coming back down.

In addition, I don't think it's fair that Buellton riders pay the same rate as Santa Maria riders. Buellton riders travel 60 miles less a day and 1200 miles less a month than the Santa Maria riders, but we pay the same rate!

[submitted by Lori Youngman]

I find it hard to justify a 30% fare increase for somebody who only rides the bus half way, it would take me at least ten years to obtain a 30% pay increase if I'm lucky. Here's a couple of ideas for extra revenue :-

1. Charge those Santa Maria riders for the seat they use plus the seat immediately behind them that nobody else can use because their seat is fully reclined. Seems fare take two seats pay for two.

2. Bus passes, There has to be a more cost effective method of issuing bus passes, Your current method of three sets of postage (two yours, one mine) not to mention labor to stuff and empty envelopes etc. I did mention this before and was told it's an audit thing. For 10 cents at

longs Drugs you could copy at least six checks on one sheet so you would have a record for audit purposes. What was wrong with the colored cardboard bus pass? apart from it being bio degradable and cheap.

Your web site shows a monthly fuel cost of \$129.23 for a Lompoc commuter, What's the fuel cost for a Buellton commuter being 18 miles closer?.

I may be reached at (805) 562-7308.

[submitted by Thomas C Urquhart]

I am responding to the notice regarding the proposed fair increase.

I do not agree with the proposed 30% increase in the monthly rate, I feel that the increase is too high. The annual cost of living generally increases approximately 3 to 4%.

I would also like to know why the fare is the same from Buellton as it is from Santa Maria which is twice the distance? There are more and more commuters. There used to be a bus originating from Santa Ynez, with pickups in Solvang and Buellton, we already have about 19 people at the pickup in Buellton. There may be enough riders to fill a bus directly from the Valley ,but we should not be charged the same fare as a bus from Santa Maria.

Why are we losing revenues from historical funding sources? The city of Lompoc receives funding for their buses, why can't we request the same from the City of Buellton, Solvang and Santa Maria? Why is the Air Pollution Control District contribution ending in 2004?

I would also like to address the issue of your new procedure for the monthly passes. On the first of the month we used to hand the driver a check and he gave us a pass. Now you are preparing and mailing monthly statements, then another mailing for the passes. Perhaps you can accept credit cards, and charge the monthly fee to our credit cards, or set up the accounts for auto debit from our checking accounts.

I have a co-worker using the Vista service from Ventura. Their monthly fee is \$75 and the city of Ventura subsidizes \$25/mo. They also have a senior rate of \$35/mo (age 62 and over, or a person with disability). They also have two different runs in the morning and three in the evening.

The passengers are issued a card which is electronically up-dated for payment and the passenger swipes the card as he enters the bus. You should look into the process they have and the cost involved but in the long run it may be worth it.

I am also concerned about the safety of the old buses we have, they break down constantly, the tires look old and many times the windows are so dirty, I don't know how the driver can see. When will the new buses arrive, will they be brand new or used and I hope they will have a restroom for emergency use.

I hope you will take our comments into consideration. I would like to continue to use your service but I'm not sure if I will be able to afford it.

Thank You

Suzanne Shepherd
Pacific Capital Bancorp
Consumer Loan Lender
Consumer Loan Center
E-Mail Address: Suzannes@SBBT.com
Direct Line: (805) 884-1422
Fax: (805) 564-6452

Dear CAE,

As a charter member/rider of Clean Air Express (I have paid and ridden since the service began back in October 1990) I ask for use of restraint in your consideration of a \$30 rate hike. I am a father of a three-year-old girl and a one-year-old boy and money is tight for me. The traditional rate hike since I began has been \$10 (we began at \$70 back in 1990). I understand a need to look at raising fares but please consider raising it by only \$10. The gasoline and diesel prices are heading back down so fuel costs should be more managable. If you are wanting to get new busses for Santa Maria, maybe you could raise fares for the Santa Maria riders to a higher degree than the Lompoc riders. Thirty dollars is a very huge jump and it may lead people to look at other ways of getting to work. Actual CAE ridership may go down from current levels. Please keep your rider fees reasonable. I urge you to consider a hike of only \$10 rather than \$30.

Sincerely,
-Jon Mello

This morning I walked the quarter mile from my house down to the bus stop only to find that the bus would be 15-20 minutes late..... I had to turn around and walk the quarter mile back to my house and get in my car and drive as I cannot be that late to work without using my personal vacation time. I work at Raytheon, as does half the people (or more) who ride the bus, and do what is called a 9-80 work week. This is where I work 9 hour days and then get every other friday off.. My sched at work is very tight and I only get .5 hour off for lunch. With the bus schedule as it is I am 5-15 minutes late everyday and usually shorten my lunch break to accomodate. When the bus is later than usual I have to use my personal paid time off. Today, even with me walking a half a mile first, I made it to work on time..... and now you are asking for an outrageous 30% increase!!!! We seem to get which ever bus is not currently broke down and in the garage getting fixed. In the letter below I stated that with the proposed 30% increase it breaks down to about \$6.00 a day.... That is true only if you ride the bus EVERYDAY.. which I don't. and I don't think many people do. Life and Work related issues usually dictate that I drive to work at the minimum 1 day a week.. This week is an execption where I will end up only riding the bus ONE day this week..... (which includes today where I had to drive ion because of a Clean Air Express glitch).... and there are many days in the summer where I will ride the bus only 3 days a week... Now,. if the rate increases I beleive I will be at the point where the costs out weigh what I get in return. I have been riding ther bus for 10 years and have constantly been asking myself if it is worth the pain and hassle (ie.. long days, breakdowns, being late all the time, no bathroom, lights not working, old buses in general, standing inm the rain, etc, etc) and up until now I have thought "yes". Now I am thinking"no". I am sure that if I decide not to continue you will find someone to take my place, but is a shame that I can't get decent affordable bus service form Buellton

to Goleta... Just bumping up the departure time 10 minutes would go long way to improving the service... Everyone who works at Raytheon would get to work at 7:00 am instead of 7:10 - 7:15 or later.... Geeze.. The Chumash Casino runs a MUCH tighter bus schedule that you people.....

Rick Lee
x2521 [second submission by Rick Lee]

Clean Air Express:

In preparation for for the 15 May SBCAG board meeting, here are my comments.

Thanks,
Deanna

Background

Have been a continuous CAE rider for 11 years
Route: Buellton <--> Goleta

General Comment

CAE has been great (low-cost; low-stress; safe; dependable; pleasant drivers & passengers)

Issues

For me, am not as annoyed that the rate is intended to increase by 30% as I am bothered by the inequities between services provided to Buellton passengers and Santa Maria passengers. Buellton riders are getting a bad deal in comparison:

Subject	Buellton Riders	Santa Maria Riders
Choice of Routes/Times	1	2 morning, 2 afternoon
Daily Commute Mileage	70	150
Cost:		
Current Fare	\$100/month	\$100/month
Current \$/Mile	\$100 / 1400 miles/mo. = \$.07 / mile	\$100 / 3000 miles/mo. = \$.03 / mile
Proposed Fare	\$130/month	\$130/month
Proposed \$/Mile	\$130 / 1400 miles/mo. = \$.09 / mile	\$130 / 3000 miles/mo. = \$.04 / mile

Am completely perplexed as to why we now have 3 mailings per passenger per month!!! What a tremendous waste of money for no value added; it

makes no sense!!

CAE sends bill --> Each Rider

Each Rider sends check --> CAE

CAE sends plastic card --> Each Rider

For 10 years I paid the driver and received a cardboard card from the driver; that worked just fine!! (And the driver and passengers knew pretty well who paid.)

Recommendations for Improvements

Improve equitability of services between Buellton and Santa Maria riders.

Get rid of the unnecessary mailings each month.

Get lights that actually line up over seats so people can read during winter months.

Lock the seat backs so the person in front of you can't lounge in your lap.

Inform passengers that unless they are paying for two seats, they need to allow incoming riders an ENTIRE seat in which to sit.

[submitted by Deanna Painter]

Hey, the Clean Air Express rocks! I appreciate the program and I believe we must finance it in a way which is fair to all subscribers. Unfortunately, the SBCAG did not increase the fares over the past six years and this means that all new subscribers with the shortest commute will pay for most of the proposed 30% increase. Everybody understands that any increase will never be completely fair, but frankly, an increase of 5% every year starting now or a total increase of 15% or 20% would be more fair to all subscribers. - Thanks for your consideration.

Ken Stultz (New subscriber/Buellton).

It's still a deal.

[submitted by Gloria Gomez in person]