



■ 260 North San Antonio Road, Suite B ■ Santa Barbara, CA ■ 93110  
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## SBCAG STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Zero Emission Intercity Bus Service Partnership

**MEETING DATE:** November 19, 2020

**AGENDA ITEM: 8**

**STAFF CONTACT:** Scott Spaulding

**RECOMMENDATION:**

In support of a partnership with the California Department of Transportation, authorize the Executive Director to sign a letter of intent to purchase one battery electric over the road coach for use in Clean Air Express service.

**DISCUSSION:**

Over the last several months, SBCAG staff have been in discussions with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to develop a partnership to purchase a zero-emission battery-powered over the road coach for demonstration use in SBCAG's Clean Air Express service. While the market for electric urban transit buses has become well developed over the past decade, the market for zero-emission long distance intercity coaches is only now emerging, with the first vehicles of this type only becoming commercially available earlier this year.

Due to concerns about the suitability of battery-powered coaches for intercity bus service, particularly range, no zero-emission intercity public transit service currently operates in the nation. The primary goal of the SBCAG/Caltrans partnership is to demonstrate that under certain conditions, battery-powered long-distance bus service is not just viable, but holds the potential to improve the customer experience while at the same time eliminating the GHG emissions of diesel fuel.

In order to demonstrate the feasibility of electric coaches for intercity service to other transit agencies in the state and across the nation, SBCAG and Caltrans have negotiated a funding agreement where Caltrans will contribute \$500,000 towards the purchase of an electric coach for use in SBCAG's Clean Air Express commuter bus service. Performance of the coach will be closely monitored and transit agency staff from around the nation will be invited to learn from the real-world operational experience of the coach in Clean Air Express service. The vehicle would be manufactured in Lancaster, CA by BYD North America, with SBCAG funding the remaining \$450,000 using existing grant funds. Production will take about six months, with the bus expected for delivery to SBCAG in May 2021. If the coach is delivered under this schedule, SBCAG will likely be the first public transit agency in the country to operate zero-emission long distance bus service.

SBCAG is working to partner with Santa Barbara County to develop a charging location for the bus at the County's Calle Real campus, where many Clean Air Express buses are stored during the day. The County is currently implementing a major project to install infrastructure for more than 40 electric vehicle chargers at this location, and the project is a great opportunity to take advantage of this ongoing construction project to install a charger for the bus.

**Member Agencies**

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

If the board authorizes the Executive Director to send a letter of intent to BYD, staff will return to the board with a funding agreement between Caltrans and SBCAG in December or January.

- ATTACHMENT:**
- A. Letter of funding commitment by Caltrans
  - B. Letter of intent to purchase zero emission over the road coach

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DIVISION OF RAIL AND MASS TRANSPORTATION  
1120 N STREET, MS-74  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
(916) 654-8811  
www.dot.ca.gov



*Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.*

November 9, 2020

Scott Spaulding  
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments  
260 North San Antonio Road, Suite B  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Dear Mr. Spaulding:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Rail and Mass Transportation hereby confirms our intention to transfer up to \$500,000 of State Rail Assistance "Bus Gap" funds to Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) for the purpose of covering approximately half the capital cost for one BYD zero-emission electric over-the-road coach.

The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) awarded \$970,271 of the 2020 State Rail Assistance Program to Caltrans for "Pilot Program: Services to Fill the Gaps." The intention of this award is for Caltrans to "evaluate opportunities and fund pilot services to fill gaps in the State intercity rail system." SBCAG presented Caltrans a proposal for a phased approach to put the BYD coach into service on the Central Coast. Phase One includes demonstration service in the existing Clean Air Express intercity bus system, with Phase Two including demonstration service in the LOSSAN-managed Pacific Surfliner feeder bus system. Caltrans supports this proposal as meeting the intent of the Bus Gap Program and pledges to reserve up to \$500,000 towards the project. The exact amount will be determined by Caltrans during the contract process based on SBCAG's capital needs for the project.

Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation will continue to develop the contract and looks forward to working with SBCAG to execute this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Gradinger".

KYLE GRADINGER  
Chief, Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation



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November 19, 2020

Patrick Diana  
Senior Vice President of Operations  
BYD North America  
46147 BYD Blvd,  
Lancaster, CA 93534

Dear Mr. Diana,

This letter serves as non-binding notification by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) to BYD, Inc. that SBCAG intends to purchase one C-10 battery-powered motorcoach. It is SBCAG's understanding that BYD has made this motorcoach available for sale at an approximate price of \$850,000, not including applicable tax or the external charger required to recharge the vehicle, under a previous agreement between BYD and the Antelope Valley Transit Authority. SBCAG requests that BYD begin the process of manufacturing this C-10 as soon as possible.

The purchase of this coach is dependent on a funding agreement between SBCAG and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Caltrans has provided the attached draft letter of intent to SBCAG. SBCAG and Caltrans are in the process of negotiating the funding agreement. Once complete, both agencies will seek approval of the funding agreement from their authorities for final approval. SBCAG is currently scheduled to present the final funding agreement to its Board for consideration on December 17, 2020.

SBCAG looks forward to operating this coach in Clean Air Express revenue service next year.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Kirn  
Executive Director

Attachment: Caltrans Letter of Intent dated November 9, 2020.