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For Immediate Release

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Governor, Transit Officials Celebrate Regional Connections Additional Buses for Transit Agencies Announced

(MONTPELIER)—Officials from the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) and Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA) today offered thanks to Governor Douglas and the State Legislature for recognizing the value of public transit in the State of Vermont.

In Fiscal Year 2006, Governor Douglas included \$1.75 Million in funding for CCTA commuter express buses in the state budget. The Legislature approved the funding and in July 2007, CCTA received six new clean-diesel buses. These state-of-the-art vehicles produce 95% less particulate emissions than the buses they are replacing and significantly reduce other green house gas emissions, making them the cleanest diesel buses in the State of Vermont.

At a press conference on the Statehouse Green in Montpelier today, Governor Douglas announced the funding for three additional low-emission buses for CCTA and an additional 14 buses for GMTA, as part of the Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations Bill.

The Governor, along with Secretary of Transportation Neale Lunderville, helped to launch the new Link Express buses, which are used on commuter routes between the city of Burlington and Montpelier, St. Albans and Middlebury.

Until 2003, commuters traveling between Burlington and Montpelier could only carpool or drive alone. Since the inception of the Link Express between the two cities, ridership has grown to an average of 90 passengers per day who choose to leave their cars behind and use public transportation. Not only is this option more affordable than driving, it has tremendous environmental benefits. Transit officials estimate that to date, nearly 3 million pounds of carbon have been saved by commuters using the Montpelier-Burlington CCTA and GMTA Link service.

“Within the limitations of his transportation budget, Governor Douglas has supported public transportation investments such as the service we are celebrating today,” said CCTA General Manager and GMTA Executive Director Chris Cole. “To the commuters who have come to rely on this service, public transit serves as vital transportation infrastructure.”

CCTA’s most recent survey data indicates that over 70% of Montpelier Link passengers ride the Link three or more days per week.

“I think public transportation is crucial to the economic success of Vermont. With more and more young people moving out of Vermont in search of higher paying jobs and lower housing costs, public transportation in our state broadens the region which people can look for work and

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therefore is part of the network of making Vermont affordable, sustainable, and attractive to working people who contribute to our economy,” said Montpelier Link passenger Jenn Ingersoll.

“The Montpelier Link commuter shuttle is one of the reasons I was able to make a commitment to working in Burlington,” she added.

In addition to convenience and cost savings, many passengers cite environmental awareness as a key reason for using public transportation for their daily commutes.

The new 42-foot buses, manufactured by the Gillig Corporation, meet the 2007 EPA standard platform, which sets rigorous environmental standards for diesel engines. The vehicles achieve a 95% reduction in particulate emissions and a 75% reduction in carbon monoxide emissions, helping CCTA and GMTA passengers breathe cleaner air and combat global warming.

In addition to the improved technology of the 2007 engines, the new Gillig buses will join the rest of CCTA's 55 buses in the use of ultra-low sulfur diesel in a biodiesel blend. Biodiesel is a safe, clean-burning fuel source derived from domestically produced, renewable sources such as vegetable oils. It is a renewable and biodegradable fuel that further reduces harmful emissions, such as carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons. The combination of cleaner engines and cleaner fuel dramatically reduces CCTA's overall emissions, making the new buses the greenest clean-diesel public transit vehicles in Vermont.

“An estimated 46% of green house gas emissions come from the transportation sector,” said Cole, citing the Governor's Commission on Climate Change report. “As more old buses become eligible for replacement, we look forward to working with our State and Federal partners to replace them with the new state-of-the-art diesel technology as expeditiously as possible. This is an important part of reducing emissions.”

CCTA currently has 10 buses eligible for replacement.

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The Chittenden County Transportation Authority operates Chittenden County's public transit bus system and provides over 2 million rides per year. Member communities include Burlington, Essex, Shelburne, South Burlington and Winooski.

The mission of CCTA is to promote and operate safe, convenient, accessible, innovative and sustainable public transportation services in the Chittenden County region that reduce congestion and pollution, encourage transit-oriented development and enhance the quality of life for all.

For CCTA route and schedule information, please call (802) 864-CCTA or visit us at www.cctaride.org.

