



MEDIA RELEASE

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THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (NVTC) TO END FREE BUS RIDE PROGRAM ON CODE RED BAD AIR DAYS

Arlington, VA— At its meeting of April 9, 2009 the commissioners of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) decided to discontinue the Code Red RIDE FREE program in northern Virginia.

For the past decade, the RIDE FREE program in Northern Virginia has encouraged area residents to leave their cars at home on forecast Code Red Bad Air days and to take the bus for free. Nitrous Oxide (NOx) and Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions were reduced as a result, as well as green house gases, as auto drivers left their cars at home to ride free.

The remaining \$2.6 million that was originally slated for the 2009 RIDE FREE program will be allocated to other transit projects within the FY 2010 CMAQ program. Recently the FY 2010 CMAQ program in Northern Virginia was reduced due to a lack of federal funds. The elimination of the RIDE FREE program will help to address the funding shortfall.

The Code Red Bad Air Days program is promoted by Clean Air Partners (<http://www.cleanairpartners.net/>), a partner with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). According to MWCOG three counties in Maryland (Montgomery, Prince George's and Frederick) also offer free bus rides on Code Red days and MWCOG expects them to continue their program in the 2009 season which begins May 1 and continues through September 15.

Taking public transportation and reducing single occupancy vehicle trips continues to be one of the best ways to combat harmful emissions. Northern Virginia's residents and current transit riders are encouraged to continue to use public transportation among other beneficial activities. For more information on those activities please visit <http://www.cleanairpartners.net/>.

NVTC is the leading source of information about public transportation issues in Northern Virginia. NVTC is a regional agency with the mission of managing traffic congestion, restoring clean air, boosting the economy and improving the quality of life for all of Northern Virginia's citizens through effective public transit and ridesharing networks. NVTC includes the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church covering over 1,000 square miles with a population of 1.6 million. The agency manages approximately \$200 million of state and federal grant funds each year for public transit and serves as a forum for its board of 20 state and local elected officials to resolve issues involving public transit and ridesharing. **For more information please visit www.thinkoutsidethecar.org or call 703-524-3322.**

NVTC