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Latest technology for zero-emission buses to be built at the MTS South Bay Bus Facility

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San Diego- The San Diego Metropolitan System (MTS) is bringing the latest charging technology and most innovative solutions for zero-emission buses in the region. Today, MTS celebrated the start of construction on a new overhead electric bus charging system in the San Diego region. Elected officials, SDG&E, and labor union representatives joined MTS at the South Bay Bus Operations & Maintenance Facility in Chula Vista to recognize a new era in transit and new technology that will create a more sustainable future for San Diego.

“Today, we are taking a leap forward for environmental justice, sustainability, and clean air,” said Nathan Fletcher, MTS Board Chair, and Chair, San Diego County Board of Supervisors. “In order to stay on the forefront of technology, MTS looked at solutions to maximize our land use, and the overhead charging system not only is the most innovative technology yet, it provides the infrastructure necessary to keep buses in service and yard operations running effectively. It also brings us closer to achieving regional climate goals and a zero-emissions bus fleet by 2040.”

The \$8.5 million overhead gantry charging system is capable of charging 24 battery-electric buses at a time, and it is expandable to add more charging capacity as MTS transitions its fleet to all electric over the coming years. MTS will be installing the Schunk SLS 301 series Depot Charging Pantograph, which offers a quicker and safer hands-free electric vehicle charge. Buses can be docked in the depot in seconds and fully charged in just a few hours. This offers advantages for efficient operations for a clean energy fleet. Construction is expected to be completed by early 2023, just in time for the new *Iris Rapid* route, which will consist of 60-foot electric buses serving one of the busiest South Bay corridors between Imperial Beach and Otay Mesa. MTS has plans to build similar overhead gantry charging systems at its other bus facilities by 2028.

“Critical to the successful implementation of a zero-emissions bus fleet by 2040 is the charging infrastructure necessary to support it. Even more critical is a skilled workforce to build it. That’s what IBEW 569 provides,” said Gretchen Newsom, political director for IBEW 569, which represents more than 3,500 local electrical workers. “We look forward to working with MTS as it continues to expand its electric footprint at the other bus divisions in the coming years.”

“Through our ‘Power Your Drive for Fleets’ program, SDG&E is proud to support organizations like MTS as they transform their fleets to zero-emissions vehicles, and in the process, help create cleaner air and healthier communities,” said SDG&E Vice President of

Energy Innovation Miguel Romero. “Public-private collaboration to accelerate the transition to clean vehicles of all types – from passenger car and buses to trucks and forklifts – is absolutely necessary to meeting our region’s climate goals.”

MTS operates more than 100 bus routes and three Trolley lines in 10 cities and unincorporated areas of San Diego. Frequencies and spans have been restored to near-pre-COVID-19 levels. Updated schedules can be accessed on the MTS website.

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