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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### San Diego Residents Asked to Stuff the Bus and Help Drive Away Hunger

*Food donations are being accepted at all San Diego County Albertsons or VONS locations through April 16*

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**San Diego** – The rising costs of gas and supply chain issues are affecting the San Diego region’s food prices and increasing demand on the San Diego Food Bank, which is responsible for helping nearly half a million residents put food on the table. To combat these challenges, the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), North County Transit District (NCTD), Albertsons/VONS and Girl Scouts San Diego are teaming up for the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Stuff the Bus Food Drive.

From April 4-16, San Diegans can donate non-perishable food items at any of the 73 San Diego County Albertsons or VONS locations. All donations will go directly to the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank and the North County Food Bank, which will then be distributed to local organizations that help families in need.

“MTS launched Stuff the Bus 14 years ago to raise awareness about the issue with hunger in San Diego and help families in need,” said Alejandra Sotelo-Solis, Vice Chair of the MTS Board of Directors and Mayor of National City. “Through this effort we have been able to help raise over 100 thousand pounds of food. With the help of our partners and the people of San Diego, we are confident we will be able to make this year’s effort a success once again.”

“With so many families facing hunger and food insecurity throughout the year, NCTD is glad to be a partner in this important event,” said Jewel Edson NCTD Board of Directors Chair, Solana Beach Councilmember. “We hope to see our North County residents stuff our buses to the brim and help our neighbors in need, especially during these challenging economic times.”

#### Ways to Donate:

1. **Virtual Food Drive:** Enter the shopping portal to purchase any food item.
2. **In-store:** In-Person Donations: Shoppers can donate any non-perishable food item by dropping them off in the red barrels located at all 73 stores in San Diego.

“As a company, we are fully committed to hunger relief programs, and are proud to host a food

drive tackling this important issue,” said Rick Williams, Vons & Albertsons Area Vice President. “Stuff the Bus and donation barrels are prominently located in all Albertsons and Vons locations in San Diego for this worthy cause, and we look forward to seeing them filled during the food drive campaign.”

Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank’s Interim CEO, Casey Castillo, says, “The San Diego Food Bank is grateful for steadfast community partners like MTS, NCTD and the Girl Scouts San Diego. The Food Bank continues to serve more than 500,000 people per month through our critical hunger-relief programs. With rising inflation costs and high household debt, that number is not expected to decrease anytime soon. We encourage the community to give, if they are able, as all food that is donated through the Stuff the Bus Food Drive will help keep our warehouse shelves stocked and help the Food Bank feed hope in the lives of San Diegans facing food insecurity.”

Stuff the Bus is Girl Scouts San Diego’s largest countywide service project. Girl Scouts earn a patch by volunteering on event day or leading their own friends-and-family grocery collections and delivering the donations at the drop-off sites.

“As long as hunger persists in San Diego, Girl Scouts will take action to be a force for positive change alongside partners like MTS, NCTD, Vons and Albertsons,” said Carol Dedrich, CEO of Girl Scouts San Diego. “Stuff the Bus gives Girl Scouts — and all San Diego neighbors — the opportunity to engage with their community and make it a better place.”

**Last Day to Donate:** As a final push, on Saturday, April 16, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTS and NCTD will have buses at 13 different stores, and local Girl Scouts will be onsite encouraging residents to help Stuff the Bus. Over 1400 Girl Scouts are participating in the food drive by either volunteering on April 16 or collecting groceries in advance. [Click here](#) to see participating locations for April 16. At 1 p.m., the buses will head to the San Diego Food Bank warehouse where volunteers will be waiting to unload the food into bins to be sorted and distributed.

For additional Stuff the Bus information, including a list of most needed grocery items, visit the MTS website at [sdmts.com](https://sdmts.com) or the NCTD website at [GoNCTD.com](https://GoNCTD.com).

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