

# REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

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DATE: August 18, 2015

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, Intergovernmental Relations, and  
Neighborhoods Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso *Sharon M. Tso* Council File No.: 15-0002-S68  
Chief Legislative Analyst Assignment No.: 15-06-0512

SUBJECT: Bi-Articulated Buses Along the Metro Orange Line (MOL).

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution (Krekorian-Blumenfield) to include in the City's 2015-16 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 726 (Nazarian) that would authorize the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to operate articulated buses up to 82 feet on the Metro Orange Line (MOL) in the San Fernando Valley.

## SUMMARY

Existing law imposes a 40-foot limitation on the length of vehicles that may be operated on the highways, with specified exemptions. Existing law exempts from this limitation, among other things, an articulated bus that does not exceed a length of 60 feet. This bill, sponsored by Metro, provides an exemption to the maximum articulated bus length limit in current law and authorizes Metro to use articulated buses up to 82-feet on the MOL. Additionally, the bill specifies that Metro's use of the longer articulated buses is subject to collective bargaining requirements and the majority vote of a route review committee. The bill also requires Metro to consult with traffic and pavement engineers on the effect of articulated buses on safety and pavement wear.

According to Metro, original ridership on the MOL was estimated to average 16,000 riders on weekdays. As of September 2012, average ridership was 31,787 and continues to grow rapidly each year. The current operation has headway restrictions that limit how many standard articulated buses can operate in the right-of-way. The ability to use larger bi-articulated buses would allow for expansion of capacity on this line to address the growing public transportation needs of the San Fernando Valley, alleviate congestion, and take advantage of available transportation resources.

## BACKGROUND

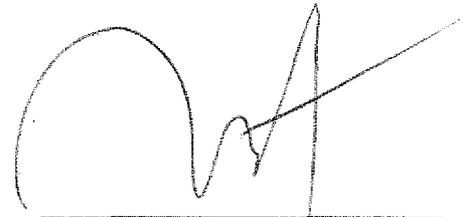
In 1991, Metro purchased the Southern Pacific Burbank Branch. After 15 years of examining potential transportation alternatives, Metro constructed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along the entire Southern Pacific Burbank Branch route, which is currently known as the MOL. The 18-mile MOL operates on dedicated bus lanes and uses a dedicated right-of-way with stations approximately at one mile intervals.

## DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

Department of Transportation

BILL STATUS

7/16/2015 Concurrence in Senate amendments pending.  
7/16/2015 Passed out of the Committee on Transportation and Housing and ordered to the Assembly.  
5/21/2015 Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Housing.  
5/7/2015 Passed out of the Committee on Transportation and ordered to the Senate.  
4/23/2015 Passed out of the Local Government Committee and referred to the Committee on Transportation.  
3/26/2015 Referred to the Committees on Local Government and Transportation.  
2/25/2015 Introduced. To print.



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Maria Souza-Rountree  
Analyst

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. AB 726 (Nazarian)

SMT:msr

RESOLUTION RULES, ELECTIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Orange Line is one of Metro's flagship bus routes, running from Chatsworth along a dedicated, exclusive right-of-way to the North Hollywood Metro Red Line Station, entirely within the limits of the City of Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Orange Line plays a critical role in the transportation infrastructure of the San Fernando Valley with daily ridership having reached 31,787 by 2012; and

WHEREAS, bi-articulated buses would allow Metro to address the growing public transportation needs of the San Fernando Valley, alleviate congestion, and take advantage of available transportation resources by expanding capacity on this line without expansion of the fixed guideway; and

WHEREAS, bi-articulated buses successfully operate in other parts of the world without incident; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 726 was introduced to address the crowded buses and seek to increase the capacity of the Orange Line in a cost-effective way; and

WHEREAS, if enacted, AB 726 would exempt the route of the Orange Line from the 82-foot vehicle length limitation in existing law, thereby allowing Metro to make use of bi-articulated buses along the Orange Line.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2015-2016 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 726 (Nazarian) to allow for bi-articulated buses along the Orange Line.

Presented by:   
PAUL KREKORIAN  
Councilmember, 2<sup>nd</sup> District

Seconded by: 

JUN 19 2015

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 9, 2015  
AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 16, 2015  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 29, 2015  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 26, 2015  
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 726**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Nazarian  
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Dababneh)**

February 25, 2015

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An act to add Section 35400.75 to the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 726, as amended, Nazarian. Vehicles: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Existing law imposes a 40-foot limitation on the length of vehicles that may be operated on the highways, with specified exemptions. Existing law exempts from this limitation, among other things, an articulated bus or articulated trolley coach that does not exceed a length of 60 feet.

This bill would authorize the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to operate articulated buses that do not exceed a length of 82 feet on the route designated as the Orange Line in the County of Los Angeles. The bill would require the authority to establish a route review committee prior to operation of those buses, as specified. The bill would require that implementation of those articulated bus operations would be contingent upon a determination by a majority of

the route review committee that the Orange Line and routes between the Orange Line, maintenance facilities, and storage yards are suitable for the safe operation of those buses. The bill would also make implementation of those articulated bus operations contingent upon specified collective bargaining requirements.

This bill would make legislative findings and declarations as to the necessity of a special statute for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
 State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 35400.75 is added to the Vehicle Code,  
 2 immediately following Section 35400.7, to read:  
 3 35400.75. (a) Notwithstanding Section 35400, the Los Angeles  
 4 County Metropolitan Transportation Authority created pursuant  
 5 to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 130050) of Division 12  
 6 of the Public Utilities Code may operate articulated buses that do  
 7 not exceed a length of 82 feet on the route designated as the Orange  
 8 Line in the County of Los Angeles, and between that route,  
 9 terminals, and maintenance facilities.  
 10 (b) (1) The authority shall establish a route review committee  
 11 prior to the operation of any bus, pursuant to subdivision (a), that  
 12 is greater than 60 feet in length.  
 13 (2) The committee shall perform a review of the Orange Line  
 14 route and any necessary routes from the Orange Line to  
 15 maintenance and storage yards upon which the authority proposes  
 16 to operate a bus greater than 60 feet in length, pursuant to  
 17 subdivision (a), prior to the operation of those buses. The reviews  
 18 shall include field reviews of the Orange Line and proposed routes.  
 19 The field reviews shall include ~~consultation~~ *both of the following:*  
 20 (A) *Consultation* with traffic engineers from public agencies  
 21 that have jurisdiction over the routes where the buses are proposed  
 22 to be operated pursuant to subdivision (a), to ensure coordination  
 23 with the affected state and local public agencies for purposes of  
 24 public safety.  
 25 (B) *Consultation with pavement engineers from public agencies*  
 26 *that have jurisdiction over the routes where the buses are proposed*  
 27 *to be operated pursuant to subdivision (a), to ensure that any*

1 *impacts of the weight of the vehicles upon any streets and roads*  
2 *that are used to access the right-of-way or are crossed by the*  
3 *right-of-way are considered.*

4 (3) The route review committee shall be comprised of four  
5 members, as follows:

6 (A) A member representing the authority who shall be appointed  
7 by the authority's general manager.

8 (B) A member who is a traffic engineer who shall be appointed  
9 by the authority's general manager.

10 (C) A member appointed by the labor organization that is the  
11 exclusive representative of the bus drivers of the authority.

12 (D) A member representing law enforcement appointed by the  
13 law enforcement agency having authority over the proposed routes.

14 (4) The route review committee shall determine, by majority  
15 vote, whether the Orange Line is suitable for the safe operation of  
16 a bus exceeding 60 feet in length, but not exceeding 82 feet in  
17 length, and shall determine, by majority vote, routes that are  
18 suitable for the safe operation of those buses between the Orange  
19 Line, maintenance facilities, and storage yards.

20 (c) Implementation of this section is subject to both of the  
21 following:

22 (1) The collective bargaining requirements under Article 10  
23 (commencing with Section 30750) of Chapter 5 of Part 3 of  
24 Division 10 of the Public Utilities Code and the Los Angeles  
25 County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Transit  
26 Employer-Employee Relations Act (Chapter 7 (commencing with  
27 Section 99560) of Part 11 of Division 10 of the Public Utilities  
28 Code).

29 (2) Determination by a majority vote of the route review  
30 committee that the Orange Line and the routes between the Orange  
31 Line, maintenance facilities, and storage yards are suitable for the  
32 safe operation of buses pursuant to subdivision (a).

33 SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares that a special law  
34 is necessary and that a general law cannot be made applicable  
35 within the meaning of Section 16 of Article IV of the California  
36 Constitution because of the unique circumstances of a large number  
37 of riders using buses operated by the Los Angeles County

- 1 Metropolitan Transportation Authority on the Orange Line and
- 2 the need to reduce overcrowding on those buses.

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