



April 27, 2026

To: Members of the Board of Directors

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell Johnson", is written over the name in the "From:" field.

Subject: Approval to Release Request for Proposals for Interim Hydrogen Mobile Fueling Stations

Overview

To comply with the California Air Resources Board's Innovative Clean Transit Rule, the Orange County Transportation Authority is actively operating and expanding a mixed fleet that includes battery-electric buses and fuel-cell-electric buses, while continuing to build the operational experience necessary to transition to a fully zero-emission fleet by 2040. As part of this required transition, a critical infrastructure gap has emerged following the expiration of the long-term hydrogen fueling station contract. To maintain operations for existing and incoming fuel-cell-electric buses, staff has developed a request for proposals to procure two hydrogen mobile fueling stations as an interim solution.

Recommendations

- A. Approve the proposed evaluation criteria and weightings for Request for Proposals 250236 to select a firm to provide two interim hydrogen mobile fueling stations.
- B. Approve the release of Request for Proposals 250236 for two interim hydrogen mobile fueling stations.

Discussion

On November 13, 2017, the Board of Directors (Board) approved the award of an agreement with Trillium USA Company LLC (Trillium) to install a hydrogen fueling station at the Santa Ana Bus Base to fuel the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) fleet of ten fuel-cell-electric buses (FCEB). The agreement included fueling station installation, operation, maintenance, and hydrogen fuel supply. The contract was competitively awarded and included an initial three-year term with two, one-year option terms. The final option term expired on December 31, 2024.

Following the expiration of the Trillium contract, the Board approved a sole source agreement on February 24, 2025, with Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. (Air Products) to continue operation, maintenance, and hydrogen fuel supply at the Santa Ana Bus Base. However, subsequent to Board approval, Air Products proposed significant changes to the agreement terms, and despite extended negotiations, a final agreement could not be reached. As a result, Air Products removed its leased equipment from the site on January 22, 2026, leaving OCTA without on-site hydrogen fueling capability.

To maintain operations, OCTA has been fueling its FCEB fleet at a commercial retail station in the City of Wilmington. This interim approach requires extensive travel between facilities, placing a strain on maintenance resources and increasing operating inefficiencies. In addition, recurring outages at the retail station have reduced fueling reliability and limited FCEB deployment.

At the same time, OCTA is expanding its FCEB fleet, with 40 additional buses scheduled for delivery through early 2027. To support this growth, OCTA plans to operate 25 FCEBs from both the Santa Ana and Garden Grove Bus Bases.

OCTA is actively pursuing long-term solutions, including replacing the fueling infrastructure at the Santa Ana Bus Base and constructing a second permanent hydrogen fueling station. However, due to the time required to design and build permanent facilities, a near-term fueling gap exists. The procurement of two mobile hydrogen fueling stations is necessary to bridge this gap, restore reliable fueling capability at both bases, and support continued and expanded FCEB operations until permanent infrastructure is in place.

Procurement Approach

OCTA's Board-approved procurement policies and procedures require that the Board approve all requests for proposals (RFP) over \$1,000,000, as well as approve the evaluation criteria and weightings. Staff is submitting for Board approval the draft RFP and evaluation criteria and weightings, which will be used to evaluate proposals received in response to this RFP.

The proposed evaluation criteria and weightings are as follows:

- Qualifications of the Firm 30 percent
- Staffing and Project Organization 20 percent
- Work Plan 25 percent
- Cost and Price 25 percent

Several factors were considered in developing the evaluation criteria weightings. Qualifications of the firm criterion is weighted highest at 30 percent as the proposing firms must demonstrate a proven history in successfully completing similar projects. Staffing and project organization criterion is weighted at 20 percent as the firms must demonstrate the proposed key personnel have specific skill sets in order to complete the services required in the scope of work. Work plan is weighted at 25 percent to ensure proposals address each section of the work plan in sufficient detail to demonstrate a clear understanding of the scope of work. Cost and price criterion is weighted at 25 percent to ensure OCTA receives fair and competitive pricing for the services provided.

The contract term for this procurement will be for a one-year initial term with two, one-year option terms. The total cost for the initial term is anticipated to be approximately \$6,779,429.

This RFP will be released upon Board approval of these recommendations.

Fiscal Impact

This project is included in the proposed OCTA Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget. Funding for these services will be provided through the Local Transportation Fund utilizing Operations Division, Maintenance Department, account nos. 2168-7611-D2157-LFK, 2168-7519-D2157-LGK, 2168-7720-D2108-F30, 2162-7611-D2157-LFK, 2162-7519-D2157-LGK and 2162-7720-D2108-F30.

Summary

Board of Directors' approval is requested to release RFP 250236 to select a firm to provide two interim hydrogen mobile fueling stations to provide consistent fuel supply for the continued operation of hydrogen fuel-cell-electric buses, as well as approval of the proposed evaluation criteria and weightings.

Attachment

- A. Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) 250236, Hydrogen Mobile Fuelers for 40-Foot Hydrogen Fuel Cell Buses

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