

BURLINGTON (Monday, September 8, 2008) - U.S. Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and U.S. Representative Peter Welch (D-Vt.) announced Monday that the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) will receive \$3.1 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation to upgrade its fleet and facilities. Leahy, Sanders, and Welch secured the funds in this year's transportation budget bill.

The transit agency will receive \$3,126,400 to purchase 13 new low emission diesel buses. CCTA says the new buses meet the 2007 EPA standard platform, which sets environmental standards for diesel engines, including a 95-percent reduction in particulate emissions, and a 75-percent reduction in carbon monoxide emissions. All of the buses use diesel particulate filters and the combination of this technology plus the use of ultra low sulfur fuel dramatically improves the fleet emissions for CCTA. All of the vehicles are low floor buses making boarding by seniors and individuals with disabilities much easier than the buses they are replacing.

"CCTA is an important piece of the Chittenden County transportation network," said Leahy, who is a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which handled the legislation. "The extreme rise in fuel costs around the country adds new urgency to finding ways to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, including increasing our investment in public transportation. This timely investment in new buses will help CCTA meet the growing demand for quality public transit service in Vermont."

"As Vermonters' budgets are squeezed by high gas prices and a struggling economy, these funds will provide more choices to people who need to get to work or simply get around town every day. CCTA can use this support to increase the energy efficiency of its bus fleet. Public transportation like this is essential as we work to break our national addiction on oil and confront a looming climate change crisis," said Sanders, a member of the Senate transportation subcommittee.

"With sky-high oil prices we must give Vermont commuters energy saving options. This critical funding will help the CCTA improve service and efficiency," said Welch.

"The public have been riding CCTA's system in greater numbers, ridership has increased by over 40% on the Montpelier Link Express route and these new vehicles will ensure CCTA will be able to meet this growing public demand for public transportation," said CCTA General Manager Chris Cole.