Governor Vetoes Bill Banning AC Transit Charter Bus Service

A bill which would have legislated AC Transit out of providing charter bus service was vetoed this month by Governor Edmund G. Brown.

His action killed the measure which would have prevented the public from chartering its own buses, lopping an important source of revenue from district operations.

The Governor pointed out in his veto message that to remove this source of revenue from AC Transit at the expense of the taxpayer "for the benefit of private concerns who have been unable to meet the public's over-all transportation needs, is an unwarranted imposition on the local taxpayer and commuter."

The bill had been sought by private bus operators, who charged that district charter operations were an intrusion into private business.

In Public Interest

The Governor, in answer, said he had concluded that "the greater public interest favors encouragement of efficient and economically sound systems."

"Privately owned transportation generally has been unable to provide a comprehensive system of mass transportation," he pointed out.

To sign the measure, he said, would be to place "in jeopardy the opportunity to establish a comprehensive Bay Area

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Brown Upholds AC Transit Charter Rights

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Every day this month on AC Transit's air conditioned transbay and East Bay express buses, with units ready for use as soon as temperatures soar.

Units on the 112 air conditioned coaches were turned on and put in operating condition for a "May Day" deadline, which as far as the district is concerned, marks the expected beginning of summer weather.

Operators, who also enjoy the opportunity of riding "cool and comfortable," have the choice in switching the units on or off as the thermometer indicates, a task sometimes complicated by the "ups and downs" that occur in temperatures on transbay trips.

The air-conditioned buses, costing $3,700,000—a West Coast innovation in transit operations—gives passengers a pleasant 85 degree ride when weather outside can be blistering the streets.

The cooled buses are assigned to transbay lines, intercity express Lines 30, 32, 33, 34 and 36 and to schedules on Lines 90, 91, 92 and 93.

Customer Disturbance

Over Booming Radios

Prompts District Ban

Because some passengers have persisted in turning up transistor radios on "dash-off" level oblivious to the comfort of other riders, AC Transit reluctantly took steps this month to ban the playing of pocket radios on motor coaches.

The action resulted from a growing number of complaints from patrons who reported they are disturbed from time to time on the buses by loud music, booming news reports and equally booming "blasting news" that occur in temperatures on transbay trips.

Car cards will be posted asking passengers to refrain from using radios on the bus. Similar to the "no smoking" situation—another source of complaint—operators will be instructed to speak to offending passengers, though they have no police powers to physically enforce the ban.
The Governor's Veto Message on Charter Bill

Governor Edmund G. Brown, in returning to the Assembly, unsigned, the bill which would deprive AC Transit of authority to transport passengers by charter or sight-seeing bus, presented these reasons in his veto message:

"The District, with bond monies, paid a valuable consideration for its existing charter business, in that the value of the charter operations of the predecessor Key Transit Lines were included in the latter's "going concern" purchase price. This measure would destroy this investment made by the taxpayers of the District.

"The Board of Supervisors of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and the City Councils of Alameda, Berkeley, Oakland, El Cerrito, San Pablo and San Leandro, as well as certain School Districts, organizations and interested citizens have joined in opposition to the bill. They point out that the Transit District, in the course of purchasing new equipment and increasing the frequency and area of transit service, operated at a net deficit exceeding $425,000 for fiscal 1962, and will operate at a similar deficit for this fiscal year.

This deficit now borne by the property owners of the District would be substantially increased if charter operations were prohibited.

"While a forceful argument is made that the present law puts government in competition with private business, I have concluded that the greater public interest favors encouragement of efficient and economically sound systems. Also, the District especially must be in a strong financial position if it is to provide new and adequate feeder service for the proposed Bay Area Rapid Transit System. To sign this measure would be to place in jeopardy the opportunity to establish a comprehensive Bay Area transit system that is economically sound. Privately owned transportation generally has been unable to provide a comprehensive system of mass transportation and to remove one of the lucrative sources of revenue from the public district at taxpayers expense for the benefit of private concerns who have been unable to meet the public's over-all transportation needs, is an unwarranted imposition on the local taxpayer and commuter. I can, therefore, see no reason to divorce the profitable position of public transportation from the unprofitable and give the benefit to private concerns when it is the total service concept that in the long term is of major concern.

Accordingly, I am returning the bill to you without my signature."  

Edmund G. Brown

Workers Vote Against Joining Labor Union

Clerical workers of the district decided this month to remain unorganized by rejecting membership bids from two labor unions.

An election, conducted by the State Conciliation Service, resulted in 40 votes cast for "no union," 19 votes for the Carman's Union 162, and 19 votes for Office Employees Union 28, both AFL-CIO affiliates.

Division 192 now represents the bus drivers, maintenance workers and other district employees.

For the first time since AC Transit placed new equipment into operation, passenger revenue dipped into the red, showing a decrease of 0.7 percent in March, 1963, compared to the same month a year ago.

Soggy, overcast weather largely was blamed for the drop in transit riding. Oakland department store sales also were down, showing a decrease of 7 percent for the four weeks ending March 30.

Nation-wide, the transit industry experienced a riding decrease of 7.12 percent for the month, in comparison to March of 1962.

AC Transit carried 4,481,999 passengers, slightly less than the number carried in the same period a year ago. Passenger revenue for the month totaled $1,041,731 as against the $1,049,465 figure for March, 1962. Commute book sales were $173,591, a slight gain over sales of $171,317 for the year before.

Passenger revenue, plus other income of $76,041, was adequate to meet all operational costs, which were up 0.5 percent over March, 1962. Income was not sufficient to provide for full amortization and depreciation and bond debt requirements, leaving a deficit for the month of $117,894. Miles operated totaled 1,905,064, a decrease of 0.5 percent below March, 1962.
MOUNTIES IN ACTION—Fred E. Clarrage, senior investigator for AC Transit's claims department, handles walkie-talkie during investigative work while serving in the county clerk's office at Quincy, Plumas County.

When he moved back to the Bay area and went to work for the Key System in 1938, he started as a street car operator, switched to bus driver, became assistant dispatcher, dispatcher and chief clerk at the Emeryville Division, during the early part of World War II. But when he was offered a chance to join the claims department in 1943, that was it. He's been in investigative work since.

Similarly, when a friend asked him to join the mounted patrol in 1953, Fred borrowed a horse, climbed aboard and has been helping patrol the Oakland city parks in the hill area since.

As regular reserve officers, the "Mounties" receive basic training and keep up with the latest in first aid, rescue operations and handling any type of emergency. That means downtown, as well as in the hills.

Occasionally, they ride in parades, and have trophies to prove it. They furnish their own horses, saddles and truillers and most of their equipment. The police department provides badges, handcuffs, revolvers, dark blue uniform shirts and the guidance of Police Sgt. David Mohn—who sees to the training that makes business men business-like, indeed, when necessary.

Probably their hardest job was the long search for a missing Berkeley schoolgirl, Stephanie Bryan. They averaged 60 hours per man in the saddle during the long search which proved to be one of their few unsuccessful "cases." Most of the time they find "their man"—or child. And they've learned, in case of trouble, hardly anyone wants to argue with a horse.
ACTIONS OF THE BOARD

At an adjourned regular meeting April 25, 1963, the Board of Directors:

- Rejected all bids for proposed purchase of coaches, on motion of Vice President Coburn.
- Authorized General Manager to negotiate in open market for purchase of 30 to 60 transit coaches and if negotiations are undesirable, to secure new specifications and invite proposals for new bids, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Authorized extension of service on transbay Lines K and R, extension of service on Lines 59 and 76, extension and revision of service on transbay Line C, and approved revised ‘Ride & Shop’ plan for remainder of calendar year, on motion of Director Warren.

PUC Ruling Taken to Supreme Court

AC Transit has carried to the State Supreme Court its opposition to a ruling by the California State Public Utilities Commission, allowing Peerless Stages to provide local bus service between Hayward and Oakland.

In asking the state court to overrule the PUC decision, Robert E. Nisbet, AC attorney, contended no need was shown for additional service between the two cities.

He also maintained that jurisdiction of the PUC is limited by law to private corporations and cannot be extended to operations of a public agency, such as the district, which was created by the voters.

The brief further questions whether the PUC can grant Peerless the right to provide competing service purely on grounds of its own financial jeopardy.