

# MTA Bill for Mass Rapid Transit Misses the Mark, Chapel Reports

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL  
Assemblyman, 46th District

The Metropolitan Transit Authority backed Assembly Bill No 2190 by the Honorable Charles H. Wilson. This bill was defeated in the Assembly Committee on Public Utilities and Corporations, but then it was amended on the floor of the Assembly into a good bill, A.B. 2643 by Honorable Augustine H. Hawkins which had already cleared the same Committee and gone to the floor of the Assembly. I voted against the bill on the floor but it passed and went to the Senate.

The MTA bill has nothing to do with mass rapid transit except in the name "mass." By its own figures, the MTA's completed system in 1980, nearly 19 years from now, will carry at the most about 265,000 passengers on the average day. This counts a single round-trip traveler as two passengers by the MTA reckoning. Contrast this with the MTA's own report that today it carries 700,000 passengers per day and that about one-third of the so-called rapid transit riders will be taken away from the MTA surface lines.

ASSUMING THAT about 80,000 of the 265,000 passengers to be carried in 1980 will come from surface lines, this means about 180,000 new passengers per day will be taken off the streets. Continuing to use the MTA's own figures, this actually means that about 100,000 people will use the system since a round-trip passenger is counted twice by the MTA but really is only one person.

Therefore, the MTA is talking about building a system that will cost more than 600 million dollars for the direct benefit of only about 100,000 people, which comes down to a construction cost of at least \$6,000 per person hauled in 1980 by the MTA. This is not good business and it is not mass rapid transit.

THE BILL contemplates that within the four corridors (routes) now planned, the MTA can run its lines over or under any city streets, without the consent of the cities. Since there are extensive and expensive facilities already under the streets, such as gas, electric, telephone and sewer lines, the City of Los Angeles and adjacent smaller cities believe that they should be consulted before their streets are taken over by the MTA. Although the MTA says that it will replace anything torn up, under the bill the MTA is the sole judge of how and when this is done.

When the State of California builds freeways, it is required by State law to get permission from cities before moving through them, or at least hold hearings, but under the MTA bill there is no such protection

to cities or individuals.

THE MTA PLANS for elevated trains contemplate that the stations will be 480 feet long. You can visualize the effect of having a station of this length on both sides of the street in a single block. There is no protection in the bill for compensating people for damage to their homes and businesses ruined by erecting these stations.

The MTA bill recently passed to the Senate does not provide for a tax subsidy and refers to money from bonds and passengers, but actually the MTA leaders have admitted publicly many times and also to me privately that they cannot build and operate this system without a tax subsidy eventually. Based on the MTA figures, each person who takes a one-way trip on the MTA will receive a subsidy from the taxpayers amounting to not less than 30 cents and not more than 70 cents. On a round-trip for one passenger, the subsidy will be from 60 cents to \$1.40.

THE MTA leaders keep saying: "Let's get the show on the road!" What they really mean is that they want to get the program started far enough, with streets torn up and property ruined, so that they can then go to the people and say: "Look what a mess we are in. We must have a tax subsidy to complete our program."

On the day following the passage of the Wilson-MTA bill, Max Gillis, executive director of the MTA, appeared before the Assembly Committee on Public Utilities and Corporations and said that he had given up a well-paid civil service job as County Road Commissioner of Los Angeles County (\$28,000 per year) to take a five-year contract as executive director, MTA, at \$37,500 per year, but he is now sorry he took the job with the MTA, and that when his contract period ends he will not stay with the MTA but will seek other employment.

We felt sorry for Mr. Gillis who is a fine gentleman, hence we did not press him too much about why he will quit the MTA, but it is obvious that he is too honest a man to stay on a job which is nothing but a gigantic promotion scheme which will financially benefit a few groups at the cost of the taxpayers of the MTA district and without providing genuine mass rapid transit by 1980! May God save the people!

### Two Local Students In Radio Institute

Richard A. Albinger, 21804 Nicole St., and Larry Hendel, 2706 W. 225th St., have been elected to membership in the recently formed Long Beach State College branch of the Institute of Radio Engineers. Albinger is a charter member of the group, first professional engineering organization at the college.



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