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Contact: Irv Chor
Phone: (202) 426-4043

TRANSIT AGENCIES REQUIRED
TO POLL PUBLIC ON CHANGES
IN FARES, SERVICE LEVELS

The public must have the opportunity to participate in the decision making process when public transit systems supported by federal funds raise or lower fares or substantially alter service levels, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced today.

A regulation outlining the requirements for public hearings by transit operators has been issued by DOT's Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

UMTA Administrator Theodore Lutz said that operators receiving grants from his agency based on population must provide the opportunity for a public hearing before enacting fare or service changes.

Failure to do so, Lutz said, can result in invalidation of the changes or the withholding of federal funds.

In addition to specifying publication of notices of public hearings and the content of such notices, the regulation requires the review of public comments by the transit operator. It also requires that the proposed actions be evaluated in terms of energy conservation and the economic, social and environmental impacts on the area served.

Exempted from the public hearing requirement are emergency service changes of less than 90 days duration, experimental services of less than 180 days duration, one-day promotional fares and regular seasonal variations in service.

The regulation was published in the Federal Register on April 17. It implements a 1978 amendment to the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964.

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