



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

# News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, April 24, 1989**

**UMTA 06-89**  
**Contact: Bill Mosley**  
**Phone: (202) 366-5571**  
**Rick Centner**  
**Phone: (202) 366-4043**

**SKINNER ANNOUNCES PROGRAM TO GENERATE  
SAVINGS IN BUS AND RAIL MAINTENANCE**

Secretary of Transportation Samuel Skinner today announced an Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) initiative to enlist private sector support in an effort to reduce maintenance costs and increase the productive use of the nation's public transit buses and rail cars.

"Maintaining fleets of transit buses, rail cars, locomotives, rights of way and equipment has become increasingly expensive and complex," Skinner said. "Innovation is needed to improve the productivity of capital and labor in the maintenance field, as well as to secure maximum benefits from limited federal funds."

Pilot projects will be undertaken in cities across the country to demonstrate new methods for involving private firms in maintaining and overhauling bus and rail car fleets, and building new depots with private funds.

Skinner has directed UMTA to give top priority to requests for federal assistance that will be used to retain private firms in the building or operation of maintenance facilities, or in the provision of maintenance services.

UMTA is also exploring the use of regional service programs, in which several maintenance facilities owned by public transit agencies would be combined into a regional center operated publicly or privately.

-more-

"Significant cost savings and improved maintenance could be achieved with a regional service operation," Skinner said. "A single transit agency may lack the workload needed to justify plant modernization or expansion."

The pilot program arose from a study entitled Technology Impacts Evaluation. This research concluded that "contracting maintenance and support operations could enable many public transit agencies to reduce capital and operating costs by over 30 percent and to improve service." The study was undertaken by the Contract Services Association, a non-profit trade association of firms that provide contract services to federal, state and local government agencies. The study involved site visits to five transit systems by a task force of technical experts.

To reinforce the cooperative approach intended, a review panel will be convened with members from the federal government, the transit industry and the private sector. The group will assess the data developed by the pilot projects, identify policy and program issues, and recommend ways to implement the strategies arising from the pilot programs.

# # #