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San Francisco Chronicle

AC Transit Gets \$4 Million / Bill includes funds that delay cuts; [FINAL Edition]

[Tara Shioya, Chronicle East Bay Bureau](#). [San Francisco Chronicle \(pre-1997 Fulltext\)](#). San Francisco, Calif.: [Oct 10, 1995](#). pg. A.11

Abstract (Summary)

Legislation signed by Governor Wilson yesterday will give **AC Transit** \$4 million in emergency money, allowing the cash-strapped bus system to delay cuts in weekend and late-night service that had been scheduled for December.

The \$4 million -- part of a package of bills intended to help bail out bankrupt Orange County -- will reimburse **AC Transit** for half the cost of transporting children to and from school. The money will help bridge **AC Transit's** \$11.7 million budget deficit.

Senator Bill Lockyer, D-Hayward, initially sought the **AC Transit** money under other legislation, which was subsequently killed. Lockyer then worked with other legislators to include the **AC Transit** money in the Orange County package.

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Full Text (443 words)

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Legislation signed by Governor Wilson yesterday will give AC Transit \$4 million in emergency money, allowing the cash-strapped bus system to delay cuts in weekend and late-night service that had been scheduled for December.

The \$4 million -- part of a package of bills intended to help bail out bankrupt Orange County -- will reimburse AC Transit for half the cost of transporting children to and from school. The money will help bridge AC Transit's \$11.7 million budget deficit.

"That's wonderful news," said AC Transit Board President Joe Bischofberger. "It gives us a little breather."

Senator Bill Lockyer, D-Hayward, initially sought the AC Transit money under other legislation, which was subsequently killed. Lockyer then worked with other legislators to include the AC Transit money in the Orange County package.

The cash infusion will allow AC Transit to postpone cuts to weekend and holiday bus routes for the period from December to March. Originally, AC Transit was to cut weekend and holiday service by about two-thirds -- down to 22 or 23 routes -- effective December 3.

Cuts to less used nighttime bus service, however, will take place as scheduled. After December 3, only 31 of the bus agency's most used routes will remain. About 230,000 East Bay residents ride AC Transit each weekday, mostly to get to and from work or school.

Lagging sales tax revenues and diminishing federal financing have forced the transit district to increase fares and cut service this year. General Manager Sharon Banks said AC Transit has

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Tara Shioya, Chronicle East Bay Bureau

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San Francisco Chronicle (pre -1997 Fulltext)

lost \$5.5 million in federal operating subsidies this year and expects even less money from Washington in next year's budget.

Banks said the new legislation gives AC Transit additional time to look into other regional sources of money -- possibly a new gas or sales tax measure for the next round of local elections.

"The money just isn't there anymore," said Banks. "Now we need to rethink who we are and what we are going to be by the year 2000."

For Orange County, the three bills signed by Wilson will:

- Let the county divert \$38 million a year earmarked for transportation into its general fund.
- Take tax money from the county Redevelopment Agency as well as parks, harbors and beaches.
- Authorize the governor to appoint a trustee if the county has not filed a recovery plan in Bankruptcy Court by January 1.

The county filed for bankruptcy in December after losing \$1.7 billion in risky investments and must repay \$800 million in bond debt due in June. Spending already has been cut by \$188 million a year, forcing drastic reductions in health services and other county programs.

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