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Contact: Debra Roth, 202-884-8625
Lisa Fasano, 415-947-4307

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA TARGETED FOR INNOVATIVE COMMUTER ASSISTANCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. —The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency named the San Francisco Bay Area as one of three key cities to receive special assistance under the Commuter Choice Leadership Initiative (CCLI), a public-private partnership that joins with employers to offer benefits that help ease the daily commute, alleviate traffic congestion and reduce air pollution.

In addition, Bay Area employers, which have long been pioneers in providing innovative commuter benefits, are receiving national recognition for their trend-setting efforts from EPA today. The employers include Yahoo! Inc., Hewlett-Packard, Kaiser Permanente, the City of Palo Alto and Stanford University.

Employers who join CCLI, sponsored by EPA and U.S. Department of Transportation, offer outstanding commuter benefits such as mass transit and vanpool subsidies, compressed work schedules, the opportunity to telecommute and the option to receive cash instead of a free parking space. CCLI helps these Commuter ChoiceSM Employers promote their benefits and realize tax savings from them. Commuter ChoiceSM Employers also can reap benefits such as lower parking expenses and improved employee recruitment and retention.

The Bay Area has one of the highest CCLI employer enrollment rates in the nation. Of the 294 employers who have joined CCLI nationwide, one-fifth (60) of them are in California. Of these 60, more than one-third (24) are in the Bay Area. Of the 561,134 employees who work for Commuter ChoiceSM Employers nationwide, nearly one-third (180,568) are working for employers based in California; Bay Area employers represent nearly one-half of all CCLI employees in California (81,268).

The Bay Area (along with Denver and Philadelphia) is receiving special assistance under CCLI because of local employers' deep commitment to excellent commuter options; the area's highly developed mass transit system of buses, subways, rapid transit and ferries; and its community of local transportation professionals dedicated to developing exemplary commuter benefits. EPA and Bay Area Commuter ChoiceSM Employers will be joining forces to target Bay Area commuters' still-heavy reliance on driving to work alone, which constitutes 70% of all trips made to and from work in the area. In Silicon Valley alone (Santa Clara County), that number rises to 80%.

Bay Area Commuter ChoiceSM Employers continue to develop cutting-edge benefits to help bring those statistics down. At Aetna, for example, workers at the West Region headquarters in San Ramon, Calif., who use the company's ride-sharing program can earn up to five days of paid time off each year. Hewlett-Packard has installed electric power chargers at its main campuses to encourage the use of electric vehicles. Hewlett-Packard is also working on a new program where transit users will pick up a car at the train station each morning and drive to work. The cars then will be used by local residents in the evening.

Bay Area Commuter ChoiceSM Employers will be recognized at an awards luncheon in the Cypress Room of the Golden Gate Club in the Presidio National Park from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Companies expected to attend include Yahoo!, the City of Pleasanton, Hewlett-Packard, Kaiser Permanente, the City of Palo Alto and Stanford University.

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