

# Fixed price to save Metro on fuel costs

While gasoline prices and other sources of fuel are expected to soar this summer, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority doesn't need to worry.

Officials will pay no more than 83 cents a gallon for ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, part of a fixed price agreement signed in December.

Metro uses 15 million gallons of fuel each year as it operates

1,443 diesel-fueled buses and 38 compressed natural gas buses. In the next year, the CNG fleet will expand to 164.

The diesel fuel contract runs from January 2002 through June 30, 2003. The price of diesel fuel already has increased by more than 20 percent since the agreement went into effect, but Metro's price has remained the same.

"Even if the price of diesel fuel continues to rise, we have ensured that our budget will not be adversely impacted," said Jack Requa, chief operating officer for Metro's bus system. "Five months ago we looked at the price of fuel and signed an agreement for [what] we thought was a reasonable fee in December. Now it looks like a bargain."

Area residents are paying an average of \$1.47 for diesel and \$1.46 for unleaded gasoline a gallon, according to AAA Mid-Atlantic. Wholesale diesel fuel prices in the region range from \$1.32 to \$1.35 a gallon, including federal and state taxes, according to the Washington-Maryland-Delaware Service Station Association.

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