



PRESS RELEASES

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Tri-Rail Trains To Operate On Biodiesel Fuel

99 Percent Blend is Among Purest Biodiesel Used by Any Commuter Rail System in the Country

The South Florida Regional Transportation Authority announced today that effective immediately, Tri-Rail trains will operate on biodiesel fuel. The goal is to operate trains on a 99-percent blend, when available. Tri-Rail is one of the few commuter rail systems in the country that can operate on such a pure blend of fuel, due to South Florida's temperate climate. The transition to biodiesel fuel will have a significantly positive impact on the region's environment and is supported and encouraged by many public transportation oversight and regulatory agencies.

"The Federal Transit Administration is committed to encouraging the use of alternative fuels in the nation's rail and bus systems," said FTA Administrator James S. Simpson, whose agency funded the locomotives that will be part of Tri-Rail's biodiesel fleet. "By taking this important step, Tri-Rail is leading the way toward energy independence."

"The switch to biodiesel fuel has been long in coming," said Commissioner Josephus Eggelton, Jr., chair of the SFRTA Governing Board. "It follows in the path of Governor Crist's mission to 'green' the state of Florida and we are pleased that the economies and efficiencies have come together to allow us to make this change for the betterment of the environment."

The biodiesel fuel will consist of either palm or soy oil, depending upon availability. According to tests done at the Southwest Research Center in San Antonio, Texas and funded by the FTA, Tri-Rail locomotives use approximately seven percent more fuel when operating on biodiesel; however, it currently costs approximately 30 cents per gallon less than diesel fuel and the environmental benefits outweigh the additional cost. Furthermore, possibilities of environmental impact to the soil in the event of a fuel spill is significantly reduced in instances where biodiesel fuel is used, because biodiesel fuel does not present the same hazards as a typical diesel-fuel spill, foremost among them - soil pollution. [More News](#)

Additional benefits to using biodiesel fuel in lieu of diesel fuel are low emissions, comparable power and efficiency, capability of being mixed with diesel fuel without modification, and safer storage and transport. Biodiesel fuel is non-toxic, biodegradable and has a flashpoint of 300 degrees Fahrenheit compared to diesel fuel's flashpoint of 125 degrees Fahrenheit.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, biodiesel fuel produces approximately 43 percent less carbon monoxide, 56 percent less hydrocarbons, 55 percent less particulates, 60 to 90 percent less air toxins and 78 percent less carbon dioxide than diesel fuel. Biodiesel fuel produces no sulfur emissions, and produces five percent more nitrous oxide than diesel fuel.

Biodiesel will be used in all of Tri-Rail's conventional train sets. The Diesel Multiple Units will continue to operate on standard diesel fuel, due to warranty restrictions. Separate fueling stations located at the Hialeah Yard make it possible for the SFRTA to operate trains on both types of fuel.

The SFRTA currently operates 50 Tri-Rail trains daily, Monday through Friday and 16 trains on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. A study by the American Public Transportation Association has shown that the single most effective choice an individual can make to help the environment is to utilize public transportation. With a Tri-Rail Monthly Ticket available for only \$80, riding Tri-Rail not only provides an environmental solution for commuting, but an economical one, as well. For more information, call 1-800-TRI-RAIL (874-7245).

