



Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority

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September 18, 2024

Good morning, my name is Owen O’Neil, I am the Executive Director of the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority, or LANTA. LANTA is the regional public transportation agency for Lehigh and Northampton Counties. We provide fixed route bus service and human services paratransit service throughout the two counties. LANTA utilizes a fleet of 95 full sized transit buses and 85 paratransit vehicles to carry between 15,000 and 20,000 passengers each day allowing Lehigh Valley residents to travel to and from work, school, medical appointments, grocery shopping, and all other life needs.

In 2017, LANTA initiated a program to begin incorporating Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) powered vehicles into our full-sized transit bus fleet. Starting that year, as diesel powered buses came due for replacement, they were replaced with CNG powered models. That same year, LANTA participated in PennDOT’s public private partnership program to construct CNG fueling stations at several transit authorities throughout Pennsylvania. LANTA’s station went online in late 2017.

Since that time, LANTA has purchased and put into service 77 CNG powered buses giving us the largest CNG powered transit fleet in Pennsylvania. The full fleet of buses at our Allentown operating garage has now been converted to CNG.

CNG buses provide LANTA and the community with several benefits. First, CNG powered buses are approximately 50 percent more fuel efficient than straight diesel engines and are cleaner burning. The natural gas itself is cheaper than diesel. We estimate that the use of CNG is saving us approximately \$2.3 million annually in operating expenses. Just as important, the price of natural gas has historically been much more stable than petroleum-based fuels. We have been able to lock in prices for natural gas for periods of thirty six months at a time, whereas diesel contracts typically were 12 months maximum. That additional stability in price provides a significant benefit for multi-year budgeting and resource planning.

One significant, but often overlooked benefit of our CNG program is the fact that LANTA’s CNG fueling station taps into gas line infrastructure that was already present in the neighborhood in which LANTA’s operating garage is located. This allows for existing infrastructure to be used more efficiently. As an additional benefit, when our fueling facility was built, UGI used the opportunity to upgrade the connection through the neighborhood out to the main gas line, something that benefited all residents of the neighborhood. Receiving our fuel directly from the gas lines also greatly reduces the need to have diesel fuel delivered to our site. Before converting our bus fleet at our Allentown garage to CNG, we would typically have diesel fuel delivered in a tanker two to three times per month. We now receive deliveries three to four times per year, removing over 30 tankers from the road annually.

At the start of 2024, we enhanced our CNG program with a partnership with UGI Energy Services to make all of our CNG purchases be Renewable Natural Gas (RNG). The partnership being offered by

UGIES was particularly appealing to LANTA because it involved purchasing RNG that is being produced at landfills in eastern Pennsylvania and being used in the regional gas line network. There are numerous opportunities to enter offset type arrangements in which you purchase fuel or energy from a renewable source, but that fuel is actually being produced and used in another region or another part of the country. The partnership we have with UGIES allows LANTA to know that this program is providing additional benefits right in our region.

Beyond that, the RNG partnership is providing tangible cost benefits. Rebates and incentives allow LANTA to capitalize on additional savings per dekatherm which are on track to produce \$225,000 in additional savings this year.

In closing, I would just like to note that others on the panels this morning, I am sure could provide you with a better and more detailed explanation of the environmental benefits of CNG and especially RNG, but the message I would like to convey is that beyond the environmental benefits as a user, there are identifiable business benefits to our use of CNG and RNG which allows us to provide a more cost effective service to our community.