

ELECTRIC BUSES FOR EAST LOS ANGELES¹

Jake Richardson©



Three EcoRide BE35 zero-emission, fast-charge battery-electric transit buses will go into operation for Foothill Transit in East Los Angeles. Made by Proterra, the EcoRide bus uses all electric components, which make for a quiet, smooth ride. Three hours is the operating time for a single charge, and recharging requires only ten minutes. The brief recharge time means the EcoRide can get juiced up while it is in service on a route where there is a charging station.

It is estimated that since it does not use a conventional petroleum engine, the EcoRide saves hundreds of thousands of dollars in maintenance costs over its lifetime. Other features make the electric bus achieve the equivalent of 18 -29 miles per gallon in a diesel bus, when fully loaded with 68 passengers. Proterra says that it is an improvement in fuel efficiency of 500 percent.

CEO of Proterra, Jeffery Granato said, "The first commercial deployment of Proterra's battery-electric buses by a major transit agency like Foothill Transit is a significant milestone for Proterra and a bold step by the nation in our collective effort to decrease dependence on fossil fuel." (Source: Sys-Con Media) Proterra intends to sell 80-100 EcoRides next year, and 250 the year after that.

Foothill Transit has about 314 buses in service. Many run on compressed natural gas. They have an option to purchase nine more EcoRide buses, if the three they have now perform well on the roads. The district includes cities such as Pomona, Pasadena, Asuza, Montclair, and Whittier.

Back in 1910, an electric trolleybus line ran in the Hollywood area, but it only lasted until 1915. It was replaced by fossil fuel buses. Today, the understanding of urgent environmental and health needs in society is much greater, so it is likely the interest in electric bus usage will only grow.

¹ Care2, healthy & green living, September 02, 2010