

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metra moves to buy newer engines

Board authorizes purchase of used locomotives to help upgrade aging fleet

CHICAGO (Feb. 21, 2018) – The Metra Board of Directors today approved the purchase up to 21 used F59PHI locomotives for \$1.3 million each, allowing Metra to quickly supplement its locomotive fleet while continuing a longer-term procurement of additional, new or remanufactured locomotives.

The F59PHIs, which were built by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors in 1998 and have been rehabbed within the last five years, have similar parts and operating characteristics to Metra’s existing fleet of EMD F40s, some of which are 35 years old and are in need of overhaul. That means they can be integrated into the Metra system quickly and without extensive and expensive training of maintenance and operating crews. The F59s would also increase reliability, reduce pollution and achieve fuel savings of about 10 percent to 25 percent over the older engines.

“Ideally Metra would have sufficient funding to replace older locomotives with new ones on a regular basis,” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “However, Metra has been underfunded for years and we have to work with the funding we have available. We believe this purchase represents a great opportunity to make a big impact on our operations at a reasonable expense, and that’s why we are pursuing this purchase.”

It is rare for service-ready engines to be on the market. These 21 F59 locomotives were most recently used on the West Coast by Amtrak. The engines will become available this year as Amtrak switches to a new Siemens locomotive.

In late 2017, Metra issued a request for proposals (RFP) to begin to replace its aging fleet of engines with new or remanufactured locomotives. The RFP calls for a base order of at least 12 new or 15 remanufactured locomotives with options for up to 30 additional new locomotives or 27 additional remanufactured locomotives, for a total of up to 42 new or remanufactured locomotives. Metra is asking for proposals for both new and remanufactured engines because it wants to weigh the costs/benefits of both options.

Those new or remanufactured locomotives, however, would not be available until late 2020 at the earliest, while the used F59s will be available this year. The F59s would supplement the engines purchased under the RFP.

The F59 purchase will be funded with money already set aside for locomotive purchases or other capital needs and/or through financing.

About Metra

Metra is one of the largest and most complex commuter rail systems in North America, serving Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, Kane and McHenry counties in northeastern Illinois. The agency provides service to and from downtown Chicago with 242 stations over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles and approximately 1,200 miles of track. Metra operates nearly 700 trains and provides nearly 290,000 passenger trips each weekday.

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