

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday, December 13, 2005

Contact: Mayor's Office of Communications

415-554-6131

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

SAN FRANCISCO TO ADD CLEAN-AIR VEHICLES TO CITY'S TAXI FLEET

City partners with environmental groups Clean Energy and Coalition Advocating for Smart Transportation to incentivize purchase of hybrid and Compressed Natural Gas taxis

San Francisco, CA – Mayor Gavin Newsom today joined environmental leaders to announce a major new package of financial incentives to boost the number of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and hybrid taxis serving San Francisco. Natural gas vehicles reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30% and cost much less than gasoline powered vehicle to operate – directly benefiting both the environment and taxi drivers responsible for the costs of fuel. Hybrid vehicles provide equal benefit, reducing air pollution, fuel consumption and driver expenses.

Incentives will be provided by Clean Energy, “North America’s Leader in Clean Transportation” of approximately \$16,000 per CNG taxi. CAST, an alliance of groups dedicated to reducing urban pollution, asthma and U.S. dependence on oil by transforming public transportation, will provide resources aimed at increasing the number of hybrid taxis.

Speaking of the new incentive package, Mayor Newsom said, “When government, private industry and the public work hand-in-hand to promote environment health, we can make real progress. The generous incentives and expertise offered by Clean Energy and CAST could very well double the number of clean-air taxis operating on the streets.” He added, “As a national leader in new technologies and concepts, San Francisco will continue to enlist ideas to reward taxi owners who invest in clean air vehicles.”

In addition, the City offers benefits for clean air taxis, including once-per-shift front-of-the-line privileges at SFO and waivers for airport trip fees. San Francisco Taxicab Commission allows clean air taxis one additional year of service provided they pass mechanical inspections. Since 1999, when CNG vehicles first entered San Francisco’s taxi fleet, SFO has administered clean air grants to reduce the vehicle purchase price.

The San Francisco taxi fleet currently contains 140 CNG vehicles and will soon have 30 hybrid vehicles out of a total fleet size of 1381. According to local dealerships, special orders for CNG taxis are ramping up and expect to exceed more than one hundred additional vehicles within the next few months. Eight-hundred CNG taxis are currently in service resulting from successful programs in Los Angeles, Seattle, Phoenix, Oakland and SF.

Of the hybrid taxis, Jack Hidary, Chairman of CAST said “Hybrid vehicles reduce air pollution, fuel consumption and driver expenses. Everybody wins with these taxis and we

are committed to working with Mayor Newsom and the Taxi Commission so that San Francisco leads the way towards energy independence.” CAST has led the campaigns to increase the number of hybrid taxis in other cities, including New York and Chicago