

**Request:** Provide direct federal funding to the **Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)** for operational support and fleet replacement in order to continue to relieve congestion into and within Yosemite National Park.

**Description:** YARTS is the nation’s oldest public transit system providing service to a National Park.

With more than 20 years of history, YARTS is the product of a partnership among the member counties of its Joint Powers Authority, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service. YARTS was the solution to the congestion and pollution created by millions of people visiting Yosemite National Park every year in personal vehicles. Today, YARTS provides quality transit service into the Park on each of the four state highways into Yosemite during the summer months, and year round on Highway 140. More than 100,000 visitors enter Yosemite on YARTS buses every year.



**Necessity:** Currently, there are insufficient federal funding streams to support YARTS and the service expansion needed to address the growing congestion issues in Yosemite National Park. The system relies heavily on FTA 5311(f) and 5339 grant funding for some of the operational costs and capital infrastructure needs but this provides only a small amount of what is needed to provide optimal service to this expansive, mountainous region of central California. In order to sustain the service into the future, YARTS needs increased federal funding for the operation and maintenance of services, vehicle replacement, and funds to prepare for the system’s transition to compliance with zero-emission regulations.

**Funding request:**

<b>1</b>	<b>Fleet Replacement: 10 clean-diesel, over-the-road coaches (~\$920,000/vehicle)</b>	<b>\$9,200,000</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Annual apportionment for operations and maintenance</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Zero-emission transition study of the service region</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
	<b>Total Request</b>	<b>\$10,500,000</b>

**1) Capital Funding – Fleet Replacement**

Over the next three years, YARTS will need to replace half of its fleet – a total of 10 over-the-road coaches that have met or are nearing the end of their useful life. YARTS does not have access to local funds to serve as a grant match for competitive capital grants and has focused on fleet expansion over the past few years to steer away from leased vehicles from the service provider. Fleet replacement is a priority for YARTS and necessary to avoid further reductions in services.

## 2) System Sustainability – Additional Funding for Operations and Maintenance

YARTS has operated with limited revenue since its inception that has not kept pace with the increasing costs of operating transit in California. While nearly 40% of YARTS' revenue comes from the Department of Interior, the annual amount has been relatively flat over the past 20 years. During that time, YARTS has secured several grants, increased local contributions and fares, and has consistently worked to generate new revenue through partnerships with Amtrak and Greyhound. At this time, YARTS is preparing to execute a new contract with an operations and maintenance service provider and is preparing for a 40% increase in costs. With the continued increase in the cost of operating and maintaining this public transit system, YARTS is seeking an increase in federal funding to support the long-term sustainability of the service to ensure YARTS continues to be a critical partner in Yosemite National Park's strategy to reduce vehicle congestion into and throughout the park.

## 3) A Zero-Emission Future

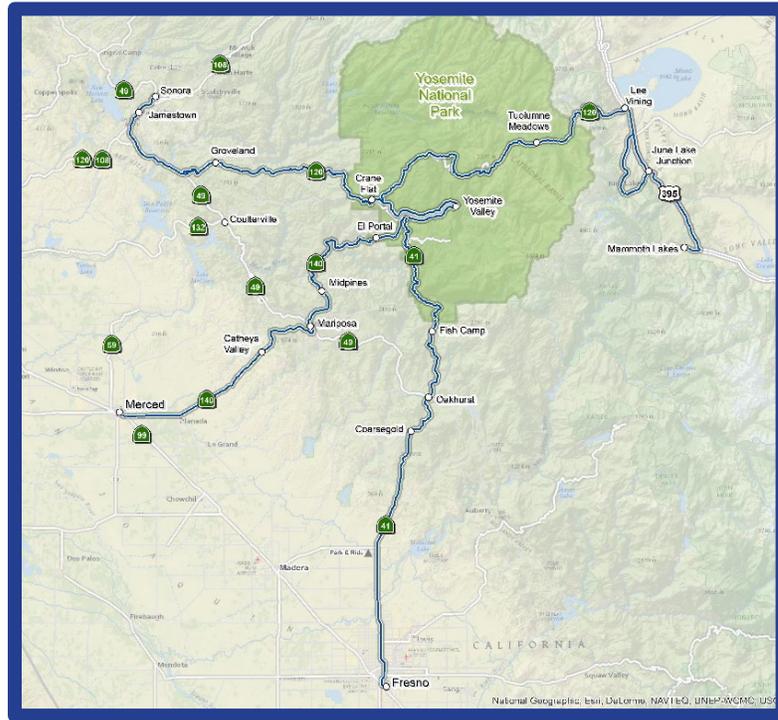
Intensifying the funding needs outlined above are new California rules which require 25 percent of buses purchased by 2026 to be zero emission vehicles. This rate ramps up to 100 percent of purchases starting in 2029. Zero emission buses (ZEB) are more expensive than diesel coaches, so capital investment in ZEBs looms as another large challenge on the YARTS horizon. ZEBs require supporting infrastructure, including charging stations, an upgraded electrical grid(s), and more. The extent of the infrastructure needed by the YARTS fleet is complex and has not been fully examined. A comprehensive analysis of electric infrastructure over this large, mountainous region will be required in the next two years in order to pave the way for a zero-emission future.

### Investing in YARTS means:

- Supporting the creation of **JOBS** in rural communities that depend on Yosemite for tourist-generated revenue.
- Providing **EQUITABLE** access to Yosemite National Park from surrounding disadvantaged communities.
- Prioritizing the **SUSTAINABILITY** of public transit and natural resources through the conversion to a zero-emission, electric fleet.

### YARTS Service Area

The area served by YARTS spans six counties, and 480 square miles, between the cities of Merced and Fresno in the San Joaquin Valley to Sonora and Mammoth Lakes in the Sierra Nevada mountains.



### CONTACT:

Stacie Guzman  
Executive Director  
YARTS  
(209) 723-3153  
stacie.guzman@  
mcgog.org