



JOSE HUIZAR  
COUNCILMEMBER, 14TH DISTRICT

Chair, Board of Directors  
& Board Members  
Autry National Center of the American West  
4700 Western Heritage Way  
Los Angeles, CA 90027

December 16, 2009

Dear Chairman and Board Members:

I write to update you on some important work that my office and the City of Los Angeles have undertaken to explore funding options for the rehabilitation and re-opening of the Southwest Museum (SWM), as well as the expansion of the Autry Center at the Griffith Park site.

On June 30, 2009, the Board of Referred Powers voted unanimously to direct the Autry to negotiate with me, on behalf of the City, a legally binding agreement to assist with the re-opening of the SWM. I took this directive very seriously and undertook a meeting with John Gray, the Autry's Executive Director. I also attended the Autry's Board of Directors meeting on July 15, 2009. However, I was disappointed when the Autry unilaterally broke off negotiations without informing me and announced the calling off of those negotiations through the press.

Since that time, we have been hard at work to come up with a solution to make the SWM a viable destination. In 2003, the Autry commissioned Brenda Levin to study the SWM to determine alternatives for its revitalization. The Levin study articulated two options valued at around \$16 million and \$23 million respectively, which demonstrate that the SWM *can be* economically viable and sustainable. However, instead of using the SWM collection to fundraise and implement either of the Levin options, the Autry has used the SWM collection to launch an ambitious \$175 million capital campaign to expand its *other* facility at Griffith Park. In this economic climate, I understand the difficulties that the Board might have in reaching such an ambitious fundraising goal.

These options include: 1) low-interest loans via the Federal stimulus funding package; 2) a park assessment district; and 3) various other City grant options that should be reviewed further. I would be happy to discuss the staff's report with you at anytime to find a resolution for the SWM and Griffith Park sites.

I understand that the Board of Directors will meet in January 2010 to discuss revised plans for the Autry's expansion at Griffith Park site and the potential closing of the SWM. I am supportive of your goal to expand the Autry Center site at Griffith Park, and I want to work collaboratively with you on finding a win-win strategy for the re-opening of the SWM. I hope that we can meet prior to your January 2010 Board of Directors meeting.

Sincerely,

José Huizar  
Councilmember, 14<sup>th</sup> District

CC: John Gray, Executive Director