



Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)

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Mike Posey, Mayor
City of Huntington Beach
2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Dear Mayor Posey,

On the heels of letters from the Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board and Preserve Orange County supporting preservation of the Historic Wintersburg site, I would like to reiterate the Japanese American Citizens League's support. We are gravely concerned by the proposed sale of the Historic Wintersburg site by Republic Services to Public Storage.

JACL is the nation's oldest and largest national Asian American civil rights organization with a membership of nearly 10,000 members across the country. We have over 6,000 members in California with Huntington Beach area residents participating in seven of our local chapters in the Southern California area.

I trust you are already familiar with the historic importance of the Historic Wintersburg site with six remaining buildings from an original Japanese American pioneer settlement. These historic structures, ranging from 70 to over 100 years old, and the land on which they stand, bear great significance as cultural and historical landmarks within the context of our own Japanese American community, the city of Huntington Beach, and our nation. As a Presbyterian, the oldest surviving building, the original mission founded in 1904, is of particular interest to me.

Perhaps one aspect of the Japanese American experience you are not familiar with is that of our pilgrimages. Our community has demonstrated an intense interest in our own American history. Annual trips to sites of importance from our WWII incarceration experience are increasing in participation as the lessons of civil liberties and endurance are handed down through generations. Historic Wintersburg helps to tell this story.

Most property owned by Japanese Americans prior WWII incarceration was lost. Historic Wintersburg bears importance to both Japanese and Japanese Americans as a rare, tangible touchstone in this history that miraculously survived intact.

JACL wholeheartedly supports the efforts of the Historic Wintersburg Preservation Task Force, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Trust for Public Land, and the efforts of all the local and regional partners to preserve the land and its historic structures as a historic site and community public park. Perhaps you and I might tour the site and see together the potential the property holds to be a resource to the Huntington Beach community and the rest of this country.

Sincerely,

David Inoue
Executive Director

CC: Council Members Jill Hardy, Erik Peterson, Lyn Semeta, Barbara Delgleize, Patrick Brenden, Billy O'Connell; Historic Wintersburg Preservation Task Force