



FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

January 10, 2011

Honorable Tom LaBonge
Los Angeles City Councilmember CD 4
City Hall, Mail Stop 206
200 North Spring Street, Room 480
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember LaBonge,

The city finance director's recommendation to reduce expenditures by cutting funding to the city's beautification teams has come to the attention of the FHRA and concerned citizens throughout the Hollywood area. To some not as well versed in city procedures the graffiti removal teams may seem a less than crucial expenditure but in fact, the teams, made up primarily of people serving community service time, cost the city very little compared to the benefits we receive. The Hollywood Beautification Team contributes greatly to our well being in numerous ways.

The HBT responds to reports of graffiti and cleans up the offending tags, often within 24 hrs. Cleaning graffiti is more than housekeeping. Businesses don't want to operate in parts of the city blighted by graffiti, parents don't want to send their children to schools surrounded by graffiti. Those with the resources will often choose private school. Property values plummet in neighborhoods painted over by graffiti. The HBT protects our neighborhoods and helps bolster our city against these potential revenue losses.

Perhaps even more important than tax revenue, HBT can assist in the prosecution of taggers by attaching a real cost to these crimes. Incidents reported to HBT can be brought to court without the homeowner testifying and becoming a target of the tagging team. The city attorney needs the vital assistance of our beautification teams in fighting this crime that costs our city millions of dollars a year. In the last several months The FHRA has been working closely with the Marshall Area Neighborhood Watch, Marshall HS and the new graffiti officer at Northeast Division LAPD to give the City Attorneys Office the evidence it needs to prosecute and convict taggers. HBT is essential to this process.

The graffiti problem in Franklin Hills may not be obvious to some because of the effectiveness of the HBT and some very active community members who have committed to removing the tags within 24hrs of the offense. To slash this program would be a major setback.

Don't cave in to pressure and reduce the effectiveness of one of the most efficiently operating programs in our city. Explain to citizens what the beautification teams do and keep them working with full support of your voters. Please find attached a small sampling of the tags, which have been documented in the Franklin Hills area in the last few months. Many of these were cleaned up by the HBT.

Thank you for your consideration of our community concerns.

Charley Mims, Chairman
Franklin Hills Residents Association

Cc:
Lisa Schechter, Legislative Director
Sharon Shapiro, Housing/Transportation
Mary Rodriquez, Deputy for Los Feliz



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