



Committee of 100

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June 22, 2009

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of an organization of Chinese Americans dedicated to encouraging the full participation of Chinese Americans in American life, I am writing to express our concern about the potential closure of Angel Island State Park and Angel Island Immigration Station. We wish to offer any support needed to ensure its continued operation.

We believe it is important to keep Angel Island open for the following reasons:

First, Angel Island is of tremendous importance to Asian Americans and all Asian immigrants in the U.S. It is commonly referred to as the "Ellis Island of the West." From 1910 to 1940, it processed approximately 1 million Asian immigrants entering into the U.S. Due to the restrictions of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, many immigrants spent years on the island awaiting entry. It is a unique landmark that records the dramatic story about Asian Americans in their struggle and progress.

Second, Angel Island is of invaluable educational value to the American public. Today more than 15 million Americans of Asian descent contribute their talents and dynamism to every part of America through their tremendous growth in numbers and variety. Nearly 13% of the population in California is comprised of Asian Americans. However, awareness and knowledge of this group still lags behind reality. Angel Island provides a rare opportunity to educate the public about the history and cultural heritage of Asian Americans. It also is of interest to everyone who cares about our shared history of immigration and diversity, regardless of an individual's own ancestry.

Finally, Angel Island has great potential to draw tourists and generate revenue. The Angel Island Immigration Station was recently renovated by the California State Parks and re-opened in February 2009. The newly renovated site will be of great interest to domestic tourists because of our shared value as a nation of immigrants and our tremendous diversity. Furthermore, the site will attract international visitors as well, especially the growing number of visitors from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

We fully understand the financial constraints facing California and we salute your courage to close the budget gap. However, we respectfully urge you to re-consider the closing of Angel Island because of its unique emotional and historical significance to all Americans. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything we at the Committee of 100 can do to contribute to this effort. Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

John Chen
Chair
Committee of 100