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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Councilmember José Huizar Introduced a Resolution Today to Fight Graffiti

Resolution would provide a dedicated funding source to support anti-graffiti programs

LOS ANGELES (June 13, 2008) – Councilmember José Huizar today introduced a resolution that would allow the City to significantly enhance its anti-graffiti efforts, as well as protect and preserve the City’s many murals, which are prime targets to be defaced by taggers.

The resolution seeks to change state law and use the increased surcharge from the sale of aerosol cans and permanent markers for graffiti removal programs. Some of that money could be earmarked for mural restoration, which since reaching its peak in City funding of \$225,000 in the early 2000s, has dropped significantly, including two years when no City money was allotted. Funding for FY 2008-09 will be \$20,000, with the Department of Cultural Affairs looking for private partners to help.

“The City should do all it reasonably can to fight graffiti,” Councilmember Huizar said. “It’s like a plague in some neighborhoods. I don’t live in a gated community, so I can see it everyday from my home in Boyle Heights. I see how it demoralizes an area and can even encourage more crime. This resolution will help our City fight graffiti and restore murals, which are particularly important in East Los Angeles because of their connection to the area’s cultural history.”

About one-quarter of the 436 city-sponsored murals in Los Angeles are in Council District 14.

Currently, local jurisdictions can add a 10-cent surcharge to the sale of each aerosol or spray can, and a 5-cent fee for larger permanent markers, which taggers frequently use to mark street lights, bus seats and other smaller targets. A change in state law would increase the amount cities and counties can ask voters to place on aerosol cans and permanent markers to reasonably higher amounts, with all new funds to be dedicated to graffiti abatement efforts, new anti-graffiti technologies and mural restoration.

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City contractors removed more than 30.5 million square feet of graffiti from over 612,000 locations in Fiscal Year 2006-07, increases of 15 percent and 20 percent, respectively, over the previous year. Moreover, the City received 80,612 graffiti removal requests in FY 2006-07, a 44 percent increase over FY 2005-06.

The City's Public Works department now spends about \$7.6 million per year on graffiti abatement efforts.

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