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COUNCILMEMBER, 14TH DISTRICT

**\* \* \* PRESS RELEASE \* \* \***

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## **Board Backs Councilmember Huizar's Plan to Tie Autry Expansion to Binding Agreement on the Southwest Museum**

*Councilmember says community needs legal assurances that Southwest Museum will be reopened*

**LOS ANGELES (June 30, 2009)** – Councilmember José Huizar's proposal today to link the Autry Museum's planned 79,000 square-foot expansion in Griffith Park to a legal agreement to restore and reopen Mt. Washington's Southwest Museum enjoyed unanimous support today at a Board of Referred Powers hearing, chaired by Councilmember Janice Hahn.

Speaking to a standing-room only crowd gathered in Council chambers to listen to arguments regarding the Autry's proposed lease agreement and Environmental Impact Report for the Griffith Park expansion, Councilmember Huizar praised the Autry for demonstrating its commitment to the restoration of the Southwest Museum, including investing more than \$7.5 million in building renovations and upgrades since purchasing it in 2003. But the Councilmember said the time has come to put those commitments in writing by agreeing to a legally binding document attached to a lease agreement the Autry is seeking in order to expand its Griffith Park Autry Museum.

"While I believe that the Autry is acting in good faith when it says it is committed to renovating the Southwest Museum, I think the community deserves to have a binding commitment in writing to ensure that they and future generations enjoy one of Los Angeles most treasured cultural institutions," said Councilmember Huizar.

The Councilmember pointed out that much of his request would merely be a formal adoption of a commitment memo sent by the Autry to the Councilmember in 2007, listing among other things: a promise to restore and reopen the Southwest Museum as a fully accredited museum; conduct major repairs to the Southwest and adjacent Casa de Adobe and restore and care for the more than 250,000 mostly Native American artifacts.

The Councilmember also called for the Autry to work with his office and the community to produce a Master Plan for the Southwest Museum that would address the issue of exhibition space and provide a firm timeline for the reopening of the museum.

(more)

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## **Huizar Proposes Legal Southwest Museum Commitment**

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Many speakers at Tuesday's hearing who were opposed to the Autry expansion plans because they felt it would come at the expense of the Southwest Museum, supported Councilmember's Huizar proposal to put teeth into the earlier Autry commitments regarding the Mt. Washington museum.

The Board of Referred Powers, which consists of Councilmembers Hahn, Reyes, Parks, Rosendahl and Cardenas, voted unanimously to call on the Autry to negotiate with Councilmember Huizar and produce a binding document when the matter is reheard in four weeks.

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