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Jon Kirk Mukri, General Manager
Department of Recreation and Parks
221 N. Figueroa St., Suite 1550
Los Angeles, CA 90012

June 6, 2011

Dear Mr. Mukri:

The Federation of Hillside and Canyon Association, Inc., representing thirty-three homeowner associations spanning the Santa Monica Mountains since 1952, is opposed to the placement of advertising in city parks.

While we recognize the dire financial situation that the Department of Recreation and Parks faces this year, the Federation does not think that advertising is an appropriate way to solve the problem. Commission President Barry Sanders stated at the Budget and Finance Committee meeting that "This is not a windfall." It's not, so let's follow his comment and not do it.

In a world saturated with advertising, city parks represent the one place in the city where one has refuge from the onslaught of advertising blight. Our parks are full of children—as they should be, and children are particularly vulnerable to advertising. There is one group of children for whom an ad-free park is critically important, those with ADHD or ADD. City parks with green spaces unobstructed by advertisements are one of the few places they can go and feel calm because they are not over stimulated. The federal government is well aware of the hazards of advertising to children and is attempting to forbid fast food facilities from luring children with cartoon characters. City parks should follow that example and also comply with the Los Angeles City Billboard Ordinance.

The Federation supports alternative ways that our city parks can recognize donors who help finance our parks. City parks could follow the example of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Autry National Center, and many others and establish attractive and suitable donor walls. In the case of major donors, one might grant naming rights. These options would be far more appropriate in city parks than an advertisement on a garbage can. The Federation urges the city to keep commercial advertising out of our parks.

Sincerely,

Marian Dodge, President

cc: City Attorney Carmen Trutanich
Councilmember Tom LaBonge
Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners