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August 22, 2022

Long Beach City Council  
411 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Request to increase the Library's FY23 structural budget for materials and open hours

Honorable Members of the City Council:

The Wrigley Association asks that you increase the Long Beach Public Library's FY23 structural budget so that it may offer more materials to residents and increase its open hours. The City's FY23 proposed budget includes the first significant increases to the Library's structural budget in more than a decade; however, these proposed increases are insufficient and do not allow the Library to open its doors more hours to provide greater access to books, WiFi and computers, adaptive technology for those with disabilities, homework help, job search support, and more. According to a March 2022 report from the Long Beach Unified School District, 61% of elementary and 66% of middle school students in Long Beach read below grade level during the first in-person school year since the pandemic began. Now more than ever, Long Beach families need increased access to the crucial educational resources the Library has to offer.

In order to make crucial educational resources more accessible for the many in Long Beach who depend on the 12 public libraries, we ask the City Council to do the following:

**Increase the Library's structural budget for materials:** The City's proposed FY23 budget includes a \$400,000 structural increase for materials — the first budget increase for library materials in more than a decade — and an additional \$400,000 in one-time funding for materials. We ask you to make the proposed \$400,000 in one-time funding for materials a part of the Library's structural budget — for a total of \$800,000 in additional structural funds for materials — so the Library can continue to plan essential updates to its collection. This is especially important as the Library looks to increase its materials in Spanish, Khmer, Tagalog, and other languages spoken in Long Beach homes.

**Our Mission:** The Wrigley Association is a 501 C4 non-profit organization, (CA State ID # 1673284) whose mission is to promote the common interest, instill pride, establish and encourage the highest standards in Wrigley. To foster an active understanding of citizenship and civic responsibility. To oppose and discourage discrimination and to create a sense of belonging. To promote higher business standards and encourage uniformity and cooperation among merchants, property owners and residents. To eliminate crime, promote community pride, and develop wholesome, enjoyable, cultural, social, and physical activities.

**Increase the Library's structural budget for more open hours:** The FY23 proposed budget does not include any funding for additional open hours at our public libraries when the community needs greater access. The 12 Long Beach public libraries are open an average of 34.3 hours per week. Last year, the City Auditor noted that Long Beach is well behind peer library systems which average 48 to 61 open hours per week. Cities with a similar population size to Long Beach, like Oakland, Miami, and New Orleans, have more public libraries open significantly more hours than Long Beach to promote equity. Long Beach residents deserve greater access to their libraries.

**Approve the recommendation to eliminate fines for overdue books and materials:** The Library should not be required to penalize residents to secure funding. We ask that you approve the recommendation to eliminate overdue fines so that Long Beach may join the Los Angeles Public Library and Los Angeles County Library systems in permanently removing this barrier to equity. The City Auditor recommended permanently eliminating overdue fines because they financially burden low-income families, they are unlikely to increase the likelihood that library materials will be returned on time, and the revenue collected is not worth the time it takes for library staff to monitor and collect fines.

Now more than ever, residents deserve more significant investments in free educational resources. Thank you for your consideration as you lead Long Beach.

Sincerely,

Wrigley Association