

Dear Members of Japan Business Association of Southern California,

Under the difficult circumstances within the COVID-19 pandemic, I understand that the members of Japan Business Association of Southern California are facing difficulties associated with your affected business activities, the prevention measures, the Stay at Home Order by the State of California, and the enhanced border controls of both Japan and the United States. As both the Japanese and the U.S. government are implementing economic measures to support the business sector, I sincerely hope that you will take full advantage of those programs and you will get through this crisis. If you do have problems, please feel free to contact the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles.

Southern California is also currently facing difficulties. As of April 7<sup>th</sup>, the number of infected persons in the region reached 11,000, comprising the major portion of infections in the State of California, totaling about 16,000. Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti and Los Angeles County Supervisor Barger, together with California Governor Newsom, are acting ahead of other states, and taking every available measure to stop the spread of the virus. However, we cannot yet see the light at the end of the tunnel, up to the peak of infections, with a potential severe stress on the medical system. The coming 2-3 weeks will be crucial. In this crisis, the City of Los Angeles needs support from its foreign nation partners. Southern California overcoming this crisis and reviving its economy will also benefit the Japanese community, as we are also part of the greater Southern California community. On this occasion, assisting in overcoming this crisis by contributing the knowledge of the Japanese community can enhance the presence of the Japanese community and strengthen relationships. This is the time for the Japanese community to exercise its abilities within this diverse environment of Southern California. We should not forget how much support we received when we suffered from the Great East Japan Earthquake. The Consulate General of Japan will support virus prevention measures in the Los Angeles area by providing knowledge from the Japanese Government, as best we can.

I also hope that Japanese companies consider support to benefit their local community. The current excellent relationship between Japan and the U.S. is built on the long-time contributions and trust supported by Japanese companies in the Los Angeles area. And I understand that many Japanese companies are already offering support throughout the U.S.

In order to strengthen our friendship and reciprocate for support during the Great East Japan Earthquake, I hope you will extend your support to the Los Angeles area to fight against this unprecedented crisis. If you need any assistance to reach out to local government agencies, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

The Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles will make every effort to strengthen the relationship between Japan and the Southern California. We appreciate your opinions and suggestions, and intend to work ever harder to accomplish our goal.

April 9, 2020

The Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles

Muto Akira

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Akira Muto', written in a cursive style.