

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power  
111 North Hope Street, Room 1044  
Los Angeles, California 90012-2607

The Nikkei Student Union at UCLA, a student-run Japanese American cultural organization, opposes the proposal to construct a 1,200-acre solar panel system adjacent to the Manzanar Historic Site. One of the main events of our organization each year is a pilgrimage to the site where many of our members' ancestors were incarcerated during World War II due to their Japanese heritage. Nikkei Student Union (NSU) also works closely with the Manzanar Committee and other schools in Southern California to plan and facilitate a special program named Manzanar at Dusk, where participants of the pilgrimage are encouraged to stay and discuss their experiences.

The annual pilgrimage to Manzanar is important to many of our members. The untouched state of the historic site is an accurate representation that gives context and meaning to the stories that we've heard throughout our involvement in NSU. This event encourages members to listen to the personal accounts of those incarcerated and gain additional perspective by hearing the voices of other communities that underwent discrimination. Through conversations with other participants, the Manzanar pilgrimage offers our members the space to further contemplate about the issues faced by other communities and generations. In this way, Manzanar encourages our members to fight against further inequality that are not limited to the Japanese American community. The pilgrimage fosters compassion and understanding among a diverse group of audience and allows Manzanar to stand not only as a memorial for the injustice suffered by the Japanese Americans but also as a reminder to never allow the same suffering to happen again.

Therefore, the preservation of Manzanar in its untouched state is most necessary for our members to share, feel, and understand our own cultural history. Maintaining the original condition of Manzanar would honor the plight of our ancestors, giving strength and meaning to the resilience of our community and to all others who suffered similar violations of civil rights. We would like to ask that you respect and understand the importance of Manzanar to our community and many others.

Signed,

Nikkei Student Union at UCLA