

The
**Archivists
Round Table**
of Metropolitan
New York,
Inc.

P.O. Box 151
New York
NY
10274-0154

April 13, 2016

Gene Seroka, Executive Director
Port of Los Angeles
425 South Palos Verdes Street
San Pedro, California 90731

Dear Mr. Seroka,

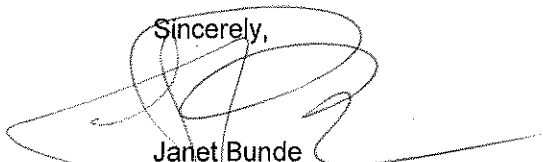
The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (A.R.T.) would like to register its concern regarding the status of the Port of Los Angeles archives. Founded in 1979, A.R.T. is a not-for-profit organization representing a diverse group of more than 650 archivists, librarians, and records managers in the metropolitan New York area.

It is our understanding that the Port of Los Angeles archives was established in 2010 to preserve the records of the port organization. These archives comprise some 25,000 linear feet of material dating back to the 19th century, but that a decision was made in 2014 to close the archives. Furthermore, it is our understanding that since then the fate of the archives is uncertain.

We note that the Financial Policies statement available on your website states the port is "held in trust for the people of the State of California ... and administered by the City of Los Angeles (City) under the City Charter (Charter)." ¹ As an independent, self-supporting department of the government of the City of Los Angeles, we believe that the records of the Port Authority should be managed in accordance with appropriate state and local laws.

As the busiest port in the United States, the Port of Los Angeles occupies a significant role in American social and economic history. Furthermore, its records provide vital evidence of key city operations. Ensuring that records which testify to significant government functions remain accessible to the public is a bedrock principle of our society. Moreover, the preservation and accessibility of such documentation is a necessary means of ensuring government accountability. Appropriate preservation of public records ensures that the public and researchers will have the opportunity to use the information in new and innovative ways, now and in the future. We hope that the preservation and protection of the permanent records of the Port of Los Angeles will be one of your highest priorities.

Sincerely,



Janet Bunde
President

cc: Ambassador Vilma Martinez, President, Los Angeles Harbor Commission
Mr. Joe Buscaino, LA City Council Member, District 15

¹ https://www.portoflosangeles.org/pdf/POLA_Financial_Policies.pdf, accessed March 9, 2016.