Dear ‘Tuga Nation,

We are shocked and disappointed to learn that Daytona is one of 42 cities on Major League Baseball’s “contraction” list as part of the 2021 proposal. Contraction is Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred’s euphemism for a city that has apparently outlived its usefulness to our national pastime.

We want our community to know that we reject that way of thinking and will do everything humanly possible to protect the future of professional baseball in Daytona Beach and Volusia County. We also stand with the other 41 communities across this country that have been placed on Major League Baseball’s “hit” list by league executives whom are too short-sighted to realize that baseball is played -- and fandom cultivated -- in the cornfields of Iowa, in the sandlots of Tennessee, in the mountains of West Virginia and yes, on the playgrounds and baseball fields a block or two from The World’s Most Famous Beach.

42 is a number that has far greater meaning to our country’s Civil Rights history than the way MLB is cavalierly tossing it around today. It symbolizes hope. It symbolizes diversity. And it symbolizes inclusion. All of those characteristics were on display on March 17, 1946 at City Island Ball Park when Jackie Robinson took the field for the first time as a professional baseball player and broke baseball’s color barrier. To this day the aptly renamed Jackie Robinson Ballpark serves as a historic pilgrimage site for baseball fans, civil rights advocates, and anyone who supports equal rights, dignity and compassion for all.

As owners of this franchise, we see ourselves as proud caretakers of YOUR team. Minor League Baseball has been played in Daytona Beach for 100 years. Jackie Robinson, if he were alive today, would have celebrated his 100th birthday this year. And we stand 100% behind this community, its leaders and elected officials in doing whatever is necessary to ensure that Major League Baseball and its commissioner don’t rob this community of its history or OUR national pastime. We believe both Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson would stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us on this issue.

Professional baseball will be played at The Jack in 2020 but we need all of the 386 to make your voices heard for it to be enjoyed for generations to come. #StandWithTheJack

Sincerely,

The Owners and Staff of Your Daytona Tortugas