



# The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

History/Archaeology Program  
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February 6, 2020

Mr. Russ Vought, Acting Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

RE: National Archives and Records Administration, Federal Archives and Records Center,  
Seattle, Washington

Dear Mr. Vought:

As Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR), I write to express the CTCR's unequivocal opposition to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) approval of the recommendations made by the Public Buildings Reform Board (PBRB) to close the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Federal Archives and Records Center in Seattle, Washington. The facility houses records of utmost importance to the CTCR and our members. The same applies to other sovereign Tribal Nations throughout the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, and to federal and state agencies, researchers, students, and other stakeholders. We ask OMB to reconsider and decide against the closure of this facility.

The CTCR relies upon the Federal Archives and Records Center in Seattle for access to critical historical, legislative, judicial, and executive documents to support the assertion of our inherent sovereignty. The PBRB's proposal to move stored records to a facility in Kansas City, Missouri and archived records to Riverside, California, will impose undue logistical and financial burdens on conducting research into these collections. Such burdens are in diametric opposition to the federal government's trust responsibility to the CTCR. For example, a significant portion of the records pertaining to the Colville Indian Agency have not been fully indexed, but the staff at NARA's facility in Seattle have the institutional knowledge necessary to the successful navigation of this collection. Moving these records, particularly without them being fully indexed, to locations at which staff is unfamiliar with them will hinder the CTCR's ability to access documents that are crucial within our history and vital to the assertion of our rights.

The CTCR were never consulted during PBRB's process of formulating its recommendations, or during OMB's consideration of those recommendations, despite the fact that the closure of this facility will have substantial direct effects on the CTCR and is, therefore, subject to the provisions of Executive Order 13175 – Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. Furthermore, the closure of this facility is a federal undertaking as defined within the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 that, similarly, mandates consultation with Tribes. Furthermore, the PBRB did not consider the negative impacts of the closure on Tribes and other stakeholders as required by Section 11(b)(3) of the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act (FASTA).

Additionally, the net financial benefit of the closure and sale of the facilities is unclear, as are the costs of transporting these records to the Missouri and California facilities and the costs of renovating or preparing these facilities to house these records.

For the reasons outlined above, we urge OMB to reverse its decision to approve PBRB's recommendations regarding the closure and sale of NARA's Seattle facility and to engage in meaningful consultation with the CTCR and other affected Tribes prior to taking any further action regarding the facility, in keeping with the United States' fiduciary obligations to sovereign Tribal Nations.

Sincerely,



Rodney Cawston  
Chairman, Colville Business Council  
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Cc: Chron  
File (KMC)

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