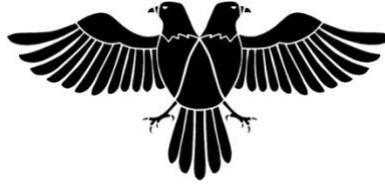


Alaska Historical Society



P.O. Box 100299
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299
907.276.1596/alaskahistoricalsociety.org

August 1, 2020

Robert Ferguson, Attorney General
State of Washington
1125 Washington Street, SE
P.O. Box 40100
Olympia, Washington 98504-0100

Dear Attorney General Ferguson:

The Alaska Historical Society appreciates your efforts to keep the National Archives and Records Center in Washington State. We share your concern that if the center is moved out of the Northwest Region, researchers would encounter significant hurdles to accessing their history. Many individuals would find it prohibitively expensive and logistically impossible to travel to southern California or Kansas (the two locations that have been proposed to accept the records currently housed in Seattle) to access this history. Digitization of these records is not feasible, and we have already learned firsthand that claims to the contrary have proven to be unfounded at best and perhaps deceptive at worst.

As you know, vital information on issues such as property claims, citizenship, and schooling records, and files related to natural resource extraction and land use cases are just a few of the critical records currently housed in the NARA facility in Seattle. Many of these records contribute to our understanding of not just the region's shared history but also pressing contemporary issues. The protection of our public lands, the development of our natural resources, and the claims of Indigenous people often depend upon our ability to access the records of federal agencies to more fully understand and document their policies and actions.

The Alaska Historical Society continues to advocate for maintaining NARA in the Pacific Northwest, and we are eager to assist you in any way necessary. On April 2, 2020 we held a meeting with our colleagues from historical societies in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. We collectively voiced concern about the proposed move of NARA and pledged support for maintaining a physical national archive in the Northwest. One solution that we envisioned as a collective was to propose a move of

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the publicly accessible records of the NARA facility in Seattle to Olympia, where we understand space may be available on or adjacent to the capitol grounds. In short, while we accept that the current facility at Sand Point may require significant and costly upgrades, we do not accept that these records must ultimately be vacated from the region.

In that spirit, we wish to be part of the solution and assist your efforts to preserve the records of the Pacific Northwest for the residents, businesses, and students who live in this vibrant and expansive region. Please share with us your continuing efforts and let us know how we can help.

Thank you for your work on this important matter.

Sincerely,



William Schneider
President



Ian Hartman
Advocacy Chair

Cc:

Jennifer Killmer, WA State Historical Society, jennifer.killmer@wsbs.wa.gov

Candance Lein-Haines, Pacific NW Historians Guild,
pacificnwhistoriansguild@gmail.com

Jamison Murphy, WA State Archives, jamison.murphy@sos.wa.gov

Kerry Tymchuk, OR Historical Society, kerry.tymchuk@ohs.org

Janet Gallimore, ID State Historical Society, janet.gallimore@ishs.idaho.gov

Karen Gray, AK State Archives, karen.gray@alaska.gov