



Secretary of State

Kim Wyman

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Dear Colleagues,

I was disheartened to learn of the proposed closure of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) facility in Seattle. The facility has been a vital resource for historians and researchers throughout the region, and I am urgently asking for your assistance in preventing the closure.

As Washington's Secretary of State, who oversees the Washington State Archives, it's important to me these records remain accessible. We have a rich history in the Pacific Northwest, one that must continue to be documented by researchers, reporters, historians, and genealogists alike. Attorneys, government agencies, the news media, and others also rely on physical access to the facility. Crosscut reporter Knute Berger detailed his own positive experience with researchers and staff at the Seattle facility in this recent article: <https://crosscut.com/2020/01/seattle-may-lose-its-national-archives-should-concern-more-local-historians>.

The accessibility of these records is foundational to our state's and region's historical preservation. By closing the facility, researchers in Washington state may have to travel as far as 1,200 miles to Riverside, California, to access federal archival records pertinent to our region. That commute for researchers in Alaska, Idaho and Oregon would also be impacted.

My office has made records preservation and management a priority. Last year, I worked with state legislators to obtain critical funding for a new Library-Archives Building that will house many of our state's historical treasures in a new, state-of-the-art facility. Our existing facility is no longer a secure space to store our state's irreplaceable archival records. I believe the closure of the NARA facility in Seattle rises to the same level of urgency as our Library-Archives Building.

I ask that you please work with the Public Buildings Reform Board to prevent the closure of the facility. If I or Washington State Archivist Steve Excell can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to either of us directly.

Sincerely,

Kim Wyman
Washington Secretary of State

cc: Steve Excell, State Archivist, Washington State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State
Cindy Aden, State Librarian, Washington State Library, Office of the Secretary of State