



March 6, 2014

Ms. Cecile Hansen  
Chairperson, Duwamish Tribe  
4705 W. Marginal Way SW  
Seattle WA, 9806

Dear Ms. Hansen:

Thank you for your February 28th letter concerning the port's agreements with the Muckleshoot and Suquamish tribes to transfer custody of cultural materials from the Duwamish Number 1 and World Trade Center sites.

For more than 20 years, the port has been responsible for the storage and preservation of Native American cultural materials discovered as a result of grading and excavation activities at two publicly-owned, port property, sites: (1) Duwamish Number 1 (45-KI-23, the present Terminal 107 public shoreline access location) and (2) World Trade Center (45-KI-456, the present office buildings east of Pier 66). As a public agency, the port is committed to ensuring proper care for these unique items of our cultural heritage.

Since 2003, the port has paid for professional archival storage of the cultural materials on an annual contract basis with the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture at the University of Washington. As you know, the port is responsible for maintaining custody of the materials in a repository that meets standards stipulated by federal law. We are grateful to the staff at the Burke Museum, one of our region's preeminent centers dedicated to the preservation of Native American artifacts, for their assistance in this matter.

In 2012, the port concluded that more effective and beneficial alternatives to long-term archival storage at the Burke Museum should be evaluated. Our goal was to establish a permanent home for these artifacts that respects the interests of the Native American tribes, who are the appropriate custodians of these materials. Federal requirements are specific regarding transferring custody and any facility receiving the cultural materials must meet federal standards.

The Muckleshoot and Suquamish tribes jointly requested talks with the port to transfer permanent custody of the cultural materials stored at the Burke Museum to them. The tribes have recently completed facilities that meet the federal storage standards and they have the



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extensive staff resources, with demonstrated capability for archiving and curating these valuable cultural materials. The materials are substantial; the Duwamish Number 1 material alone is stored in more than 180 boxes.

We have signed agreements with both tribes to ensure the collection will be available for research and study, in secure and proper storage.

The port has supported the Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center as an important community resource. In 2008, the port agreed with the Burke Museum to loan several items from materials in archival storage at the museum for exhibit at the Longhouse, on an annual basis. The port was pleased to permit extensions of the loan until this year.

Although the materials from the port collection loaned by the Burke Museum are no longer available, the museum has offered to loan replacement items of similar historic value and interest to the Longhouse for exhibit.

The port believes it is long past time for the collection to be returned to the Native American community. We believe the tribes, not the port, should make the ultimate decisions about the long-term stewardship of these historical materials.

Sincerely,



Tay Yoshitani

CEO

cc: Commission  
Linda Styrk  
Traci Goodwin  
George Blomberg

