

June 1, 2011

Hon. Virginia Cross
Chair, Muckleshoot Tribal Council
39015 172nd Avenue Southeast, Auburn, Washington 98092

Hon. Leonard Forsman
Chair, Suquamish Tribal Council
15838 Sandy Hook Road, P.O. Box 498
Suquamish, Washington 98392-0498

Dear Chair Cross and Chair Forsman:

For more than 20 years, the Port of Seattle has been responsible for the storage and preservation of materials excavated from Native American archeological sites during port construction operations. We honor our obligation to respect the cultural significance and heritage of the region's Native American tribes, and look forward to discussing this matter with you.

Following discussions with the recognized Tribes, the Port entered into agreements with the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture at the University of Washington for professional care and curation of the materials. As part of its responsibility, the Burke Museum has made certain materials available for academic study and community display.

The materials held by the Burke Museum include:

- Duwamish No. 1 site: Archeological excavations in 1976 and 1978 near the port's Terminal 107 produced 82 cubic feet of material. In 1986, excavations for a Metro wastewater project near Terminal 107 produced another 67 cubic feet of material. The collections include artifacts from stone and bone, a ceramic shard and samples of shell, soil and stone.
- Port of Seattle World Trade Center Site: Excavation of material at the site on Elliott Bay waterfront produced six cubic feet of material.

The Port pays for the storage on an annual contract basis with the museum. The Museum has in some cases repackaged the materials as necessary, although substantial work is needed to complete the effort. We appreciate the care and commitment of the Museum to preserve the materials and to make artifacts available for research and display.



Although the materials are in good hands at the Burke Museum, the Port wishes to have discussions with you about a permanent disposition of the materials. Our goal is to establish a long-term agreement that secures the proper storage of the materials, respects the Tribes' interests, and mitigates the expense to the Port.

To this end, the Port would like to propose that the Port donate the materials permanently to the Burke Museum. After consultation with the Tribes, we would make arrangements with the museum for the proper packaging of the materials and assure the materials would be made available for research and for loan to the Tribes and other institutions as appropriate.


The Port would like to complete the agreement to transfer the materials to the Burke Museum by the end of 2011 to allow for these discussions.

Port staff will contact Tribal officials to schedule discussions about the disposition of the materials. We welcome your suggestions and look forward to working together to achieve a mutually satisfactory agreement.

Sincerely,



Bill Bryant
President, Seattle Port Commission


Tay Yoshitani
CEO

cc: Commission
Mike McLaughlin
George Blomberg