



March 26, 2012

Honorable Virginia Cross
Chair, Muckleshoot Tribal Council
39015 172nd Avenue SE
Auburn WA, 98092

Honorable Leonard Forsman
Chair, Suquamish Tribal Council
15838 Sandy Hook Road
PO Box 498
Suquamish WA 98392-0498

Dear Chair Cross and Chair Forsman:

I am writing to follow up on our earlier communications to the Muckleshoot and Suquamish tribes to request a discussion with you about the permanent placement of Native American cultural materials currently in the Port's possession.

For more than 20 years, the Port of Seattle has been responsible for the storage and preservation of materials excavated from Native American archaeological sites during Port construction operations. As you know, the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture has been the custodian of the materials under an annual contract. That contract expires this month.

Commissioner Bill Bryant and Port CEO Tay Yoshitani wrote to the Tribes in June, 2011, stating the Port's intent to seek a permanent solution to the custody of the materials and inviting a dialogue with the Tribes. We received a response last week.

As we had not received an expression of interest by the Tribes, the Port began discussions with the Burke Museum to make permanent disposition of the materials through an interlocal agreement to convey permanent custody and title to the Museum. Our goal is to establish a long-term agreement that secures the proper storage of the materials, respects the interest of the Native American tribes and mitigates the expense to the Port.

As part of the agreement, the Port would make a one-time payment of \$117,045 to cover the costs of professional packaging, storage, and cataloging of the materials.

In transferring permanent custody of the Collection to the Museum, the Port intends that these materials would remain readily available to the Tribes for inspection, research and other purposes as is mutually agreeable by the Tribes and the Museum.

It is our hope that this permanent arrangement with the Burke Museum will assure that these culturally significant materials are protected for the future.

We have scheduled a public hearing and first reading and on the proposed Burke Museum agreement on April 10, 2012. Final action would be at a subsequent meeting. Please contact us at your earliest convenience if you would like to discuss other arrangements. We are committed to ensuring that these historic and culturally significant materials are handled appropriately.

Sincerely,



Gael Tarleton
President
Port of Seattle Commission

cc: Port of Seattle Commission
Tay Yoshitani, CEO
Kurt Beckett
Mike McLaughlin
Mike Merritt
George Blomberg