

HAI Advises Clients to Plan Ahead: Closure of the National Archives at Seattle Will Impact Litigation Research

The closure of the NARA-Seattle facility will likely have significant impact on current and potential federal and state litigation.

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES, February 6, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) announced on January 27, 2020, that the [National Archives at Seattle, Washington](#) will be closing permanently. The Seattle branch of the National Archives, which is one of twelve regionalized research facilities across the United States, is home to nearly one million boxes of permanent records for the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. The closure will also likely impact the Seattle Federal Records Center, which jointly shares the Sand Point Way facility with NARA-Seattle.

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*Dr. Jason Gart, Vice President
and Director of Litigation
Research*

The building was recommended for closure and sale by the Public Buildings Reform Board (PBRB) and was approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on January 17, 2020, despite a concerted lobbying effort by

members of Congress to keep the facility open. A specific date has not been set for the closure, but NARA staff indicated that the sale process may take 18 months.

In addition to its impact on scholars and the local research community, the closure of the NARA-Seattle facility and the Seattle FRC will likely have a significant impact on current and potential federal and state litigation—especially environmental, natural resource, and Native American tribal matters.

HAI has undertaken extensive records research at the NARA-Seattle facility for numerous law firms and corporate clients. The material, which includes the permanent records of the Seattle District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, EPA Region 10, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, among many others, is often introduced as evidence in support of land, water, and natural resource disputes, as well as in Indian law and Tribal matters.

“The federal records currently stored at NARA-Seattle and in the Seattle FRC have been crucial to a large number of our clients' legal cases in the past—and they will certainly be important in the future,” Vice President and Director of Litigation Research Dr. Jason H. Gart noted. “Once the move begins, these records will likely be unavailable for some time. We are advising our clients to plan accordingly and if possible to expedite any anticipated research that involves a review of federal or court records at the two facilities,” Gart said.

According to the OMB plan, the records will be permanently relocated to NARA regional facilities in California and Kansas. However, the records will likely be inaccessible to researchers for a significant amount of time. Susan Karren, NARA-Seattle's director, estimates that only .001% of the facility's 56,000 cubic feet of records are digitized and available online. Researchers will

otherwise have to wait for the records to be inventoried, shipped, and reprocessed at their new sites. Many records may be pulled from circulation well before the facilities' official closure date.

HAI historians and subject-matter experts have wide-ranging knowledge of NARA-Seattle's record holdings and can quickly identify records that may be useful for your legal matter. If you are in need of [historical research for litigation](#) that may involve NARA-Seattle, please contact Jason Gart, Mike Reis, Kim Silvi, or Allison Rebadow.

About HAI

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