

Proposed renovations at the National Archives

Proposed renovations at the National Archives will affect all researchers. As you have probably heard, if the proposed changes materialize, some research space at the downtown facility will be converted to offices, exhibits, and other uses, and research services will have to be reconfigured into a smaller space. To assure that research resources are enhanced, rather than diminished, we again appeal—urgently--for your help.

There is an extremely important congressional subcommittee hearing later this month. The hearing of the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives, which oversees NARA, will examine the National Archives mission. The proposed changes at Archives-1 will be discussed. The new Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero, will testify.

This is our opportunity to voice concerns and priorities to congressional leaders. Please participate by 1) writing to the members of the subcommittee (details below); and 2) attending the hearing if you are in the Washington DC area (details below).

1. CONTACT SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS: It is critical that we contact every member of the subcommittee in advance, to 1) encourage them to attend and participate in the meeting, 2) to express our concerns, and 3) to urge them to make researcher services a priority. Please take time now to send each of them a note. It is especially important for constituents of the subcommittee members to contact those members.

(See below for list of subcommittee members, and suggestions for writing.)

2. ATTEND THE HEARING: If you are in the Washington DC area on 16 December, please attend the hearing. Members of Congress take careful note of attendance at such hearings. A well-attended meeting will communicate that researchers care about what happens at NARA. Wednesday, 16 December 2009; 2 p.m. Rayburn House Office Building, room 2154

ALSO, if you are in the DC area, a public meeting will be held the following day, 17 December 2009, at 1:00 p.m. at NARA specifically to discuss the proposed changes. If you can make that meeting also, please put it on your calendar.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING TO SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Keep your message to one page.
- At the TOP of the message, identify your reason for writing. For example: “Re: Information Policy Subcommittee Hearing on National Archives, December 16.”
- If at all possible, write an individualized letter (you can cite some issues below, or add others; a sample letter appears below).
- Contact each member only once about the hearing.
- Be succinct. Readers should be able to read and understand the message in one minute. Specify your request in the first or second sentence. In another two or three sentences explain how important it is for the member to attend and participate in the hearing.
- Specify if you are writing as an individual or representing a group.

Issues you may wish to address (among others you might include):

- Renovations at Archives-1 (downtown) should aim to make it a world-class research facility.
- Reconsider decisions already made (on the museum side of the building) so the result will optimally serve the public and researchers without compromising the latter.
- Upgrade services, personnel, hardware, and software to bring the research facility in line with other first-rate research facilities in the world.

How to contact subcommittee members:

- If you live in a member's district, use the "Write your Representative" site, which provides direct email contact for constituents. Users enter a state +zip code. Use this link: <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>
- To contact other members, use email if an address appears below (many do not provide email addresses for non-constituents). Otherwise FAX letters. Do not use USPS mail as postal delivery to congressional offices takes very long. (See below.)
- If you represent an organization, follow up with a reminder fax on December 15.

SAMPLE LETTER (PLEASE VARY AND PERSONALIZE)

Date

Addressee / address

Re: Information Policy Subcommittee Hearing on National Archives, December 16

Dear _____:

The proposed renovation at the National Archives (Washington, DC facility) is a major concern for all researchers. As [a frequent researcher at NARA, a representative of...] I hope the work being considered will result in upgraded, enhanced research facilities that make it a world-class research facility. Many of us are worried that some changes appear to aggrandize exhibits, the gift shop, and other tourist attractions in the building at the expense of resources serving researchers.

First and foremost, the public documents preserved at NARA should be made accessible to scholars, historians, educators, journalists, artists, family historians, scientists, and other researchers—via up-to-date technology, facilities, and expert archival assistance. In your oversight role, please assure that this is the top priority as renovations proceed. I hope you will be at the subcommittee meeting and take an active role in the proceedings. [I plan to attend the hearing.]

Congressional oversight and support for research services is critical if NARA is to remain a renowned research institution, fulfilling its mission to the American public, and in line with similar facilities in other countries.

Thank you, in advance, for your support. If you wish additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

NAME / AFFILIATION (IF ANY)

SUBCOMMITTEE

Clay, William Lacy / D / MO, 1st D. / Chairman / Phone: (202) 225-2406 / Fax: (202) 226-3717

Kanjorski, Paul / D / PA, 11th D. / phone: 202-225-6511 / fax (202) 225-0764

Maloney, Carolyn / D / NY, 14th D. / fax: 202-225-4709

http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com_email_form&task=nondist&Itemid=105

Norton, Eleanor Holmes / D / DC / phone: (202) 225-8050 / fax: (202) 225-3002

Davis, Danny / D / Chicago, 7D. / fax (202) 225-5641

https://forms.house.gov/davis/webforms/issue_subscribe.htm

Driehaus, Steve / D / OH, 1st D. / <http://tinyurl.com/yz637fg> Fax: (202) 225-3012

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Cuellar, Henry / D / TX, 28th D. / phone: 202-225-1640 / fax: 202-225-1641

McHenry, Patrick / R / NC, 10th D / Ranking minority / phone: 202.225.2576 / Fax: 202.225.0316

Westmoreland, Lynn / R / GA, 3rd D. / Vice Ranking minority / Phone (202) 225-5901 / Fax (202) 225-2515

Mica, John / R / FL, 7th D. / Fax: (202) 226-0821 <http://mica.house.gov/Contact/ContactForm.htm>

Chaffetz, Jason / R / UT, 3rd D. / Phone: (202) 225-7751 / Fax: (202) 225-5629

Thank you very much for your assistance!

Angela McGhie

President, National Capital Area Chapter

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