

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 19, 2026

Ed Forst
Acting Archivist of the United States
U.S. National Archives and Records
Administration
700 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20408

Bradford Wilson
Archivist of the United States Designate
U.S. National Archives and Records
Administration
700 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20408

Dear Mr. Forst and Mr. Wilson,

We write to express our concerns about the pending closure of the National Archives at San Francisco, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Federal Records Center and archives facility in San Bruno, California. This facility holds immigration, naval, geological and tribal records, from as far back as the 1850s, that are integral to stakeholders in our congressional districts, including families, researchers, and tribal members. The records cover not only California but also Nevada, Hawai'i, Guam, American Samoa, Navy bases in the Pacific, and the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. While we appreciate the need to reevaluate NARA operations as records are digitized and infrastructure ages, we believe closing this facility would be a mistake and we urge NARA to reconsider this decision.

This facility is not simply a repository of records. For so many of our constituents, it holds the story of their family's history. It's a place where they go to trace the story of their family's immigration journey or their family's military service. According to the National Archives at San Francisco, each year the facility sees on average 500 researchers using 3,000 original records in their research room, and the staff answer an average of nearly 2,000 off-site written reference requests. In Fiscal Year 2025, the facility had the fourth most used research room in the Field Division and had the fifth largest volume of off-site reference requests.

While we appreciate the need to better utilize government facilities, we are not yet clear about what the potential cost savings might be from closing the San Bruno facility, and whether they are worth the significant negative impacts that will result from doing so. We would like to understand how much the current facility costs to operate, whether there are any other lower-cost alternatives in the region, and how much it would cost to transport the records. We also have concerns about whether the required administrative procedure was followed in making this decision.

The pending closure of this facility and moving records to six different facilities across the country will create an undue burden on public access. Many of the immigration documents housed at the facility are one-of-a-kind records from the era when the Chinese Exclusion Act was in effect and are a vital part of our region's history, holding significant meaning to many of

the constituents and families we represent. One concern we have with a potential move is the locations at which these files end up may not be familiar with the immigration patterns that are unique to our region, making it more difficult to trace family records and serve the public. The facility also contains documents related to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, including the Alien Enemy files. Access to these records has allowed descendants to learn directly about their family members' experiences, enabling them to engage with American history in a deeply personal way. Our constituents will also have to travel greater distances and at great cost to access these records. This would be in direct opposition to NARA's mission: "[T]o provide public access to Federal Government records in our custody and control. Public access to government records strengthens democracy by allowing Americans to claim their rights of citizenship, hold their government accountable, and understand their history so they can participate more effectively in their government."

We also have concerns about the proposed 2-3-year timeline for the facility's closure. With over 100,000 cubic feet of permanent records, we do not believe 2-3 years will be sufficient to handle the move with the care and consideration needed. Given the historical significance of some of the documents housed at the facility, we are also concerned with how the most sensitive documents will be handled, cared for, and transported. Some of these documents date back to the late 1880s and are not easily moved without putting them at risk of damage, loss or destruction. The closure also calls into question what happens to the agreement between the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service and NARA in 2009 that would keep immigration records housed at the San Bruno archives on site when they were to be transferred to NARA.¹

Finally, we are concerned about the impact the facility's closure would have on current staff that have served our constituents in accessing historical materials for many years. Specifically, we are concerned by the lack of information they have received or evidence of a plan to support them. We would also like to understand whether there will be opportunities for them to transfer.

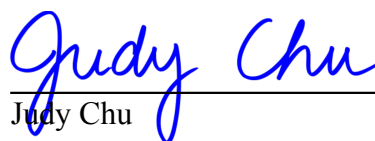
The closure of this facility will place an undue burden on public access, expose one-of-a-kind documents to potential loss or destruction, and potentially leave dedicated public servants without a job in the communities they have served for many years. For these reasons, we respectfully urge NARA to reconsider the closure of the NARA Federal Records Center and archives facility in San Bruno, and **request a response that addresses the concerns we have raised above by September 18, 2026.**

Sincerely,

¹ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Alien Files (A-Files)," last accessed July 30, 2026, <https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/aliens>.



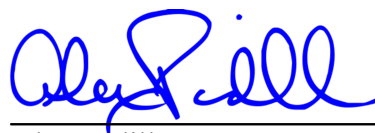
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



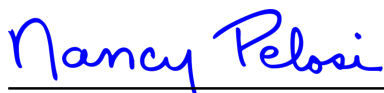
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



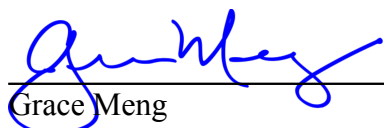
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



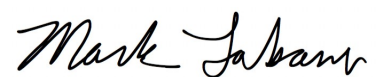
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



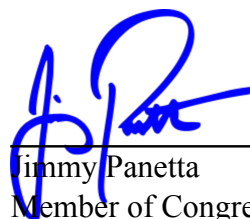
MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



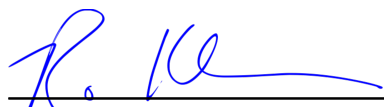
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



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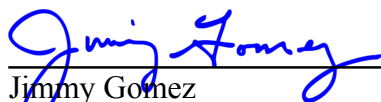
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



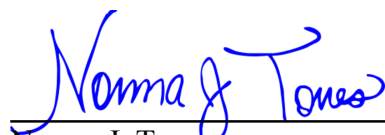
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



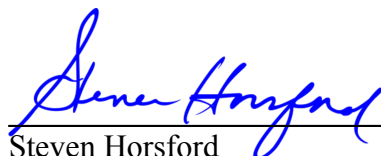
Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



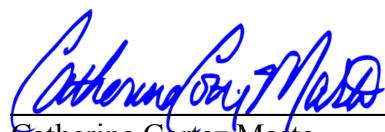
Mark E. Amodei
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Dave Min
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress
Nevada's Fourth
Congressional District



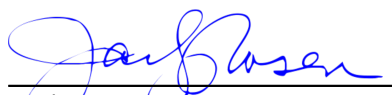
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

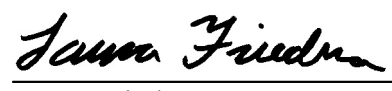


Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress


Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

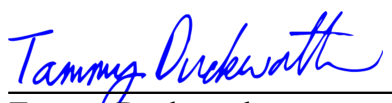

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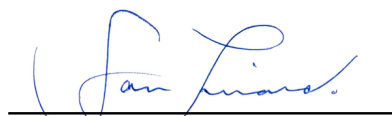

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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress


Sam T. Liccardo
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