NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

February 7, 2020

Dr. Allyson Brooks
State Historic Preservation Officer / Director
Dept of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
PO Box 48343
Olympia, WA 98504-8343

Re: Section 106 consultation initiation; proposed Area of Potential Effects; notice of upcoming informational meeting and cultural resource survey (DAHP Identification number pending)

Dear Dr. Brooks,

With this letter, the National Science Foundation (NSF) seeks to inform you of a proposed federal undertaking and to initiate Section 106 consultation, per the National Historic Preservation Act. We also invite your comments on the proposed Area of Potential Effects (APE) and your participation at an upcoming informational meeting and cultural resources survey, as described below. NSF is the lead agency for this undertaking. Because the proposed undertaking would occur on federal land administered by the Department of Energy (DOE), DOE is providing support and the two agencies will coordinate closely on this consultation. Concurrent to this letter, NSF has notified tribes about the proposal and the upcoming meeting and survey.

Background

The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) is a national facility for gravitational-wave research and consists of two interferometers, located in Livingston, Louisiana and Hanford, Washington. LIGO operation is funded by NSF and operated by the

California Institute of Technology (CalTech) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The interferometer in Hanford (LIGO Hanford) is located on land owned by the United States and administered by DOE. Per its 1993 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DOE, NSF has a permit to use the site for LIGO.

Proposed LIGO Exploration Center

In 2019, CalTech received a grant for $7.7 million from the State of Washington to construct a LIGO STEM Observatory adjacent to the interferometer, in Richland, WA. CalTech has begun design work for this facility, calling it the LIGO Stem Exploration Center (LExC) and proposes to begin construction in October 2020. LExC has the potential to complement and enhance the existing Education and Public Outreach component of NSF's award for the operations of LIGO Hanford. NSF, as the permit holder, is therefore considering whether to authorize Caltech to construct and operate LExC within the boundaries of the land described in the permit issued by DOE. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, NSF will conduct a review of potential environmental impacts of this proposal. NSF intends to conduct Section 106 consultation concurrent with the NEPA process.

Proposed Area of Potential Effects

The proposed LExC would be constructed east of the existing parking lot along the current access road to LIGO (see attached plan). The visitor center would include construction of a new 234, 227 f^2 building and associated infrastructure including water/sewer utilities, electrical service and telecommunications connection. All utilities would be extended from existing services at the LIGO. LExC construction activities would require excavation to support utilities installation and grading as needed for construction of a parking lot. The project area is approximately 14.7 acres.

NSF proposes to include the full project area, as shown in the enclosed, as the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the determination of potential effects to historic properties. This is the area that would contain all proposed development, as well as staging and construction vehicles. LExC operations would be limited to this area. Following input from your office and the tribes, NSF will refine the APE document in response to any comments received; place it on the relevant USGS quad map; and indicate the locations of the proposed facilities, related staging area, and utilities on the final APE document. NSF will also consider your comments in refining the scope of the cultural resource survey.

Informational Meeting

CalTech will be presenting information about the proposed LExC at DOE's February meeting with the SHPO and tribes; due to travel constraints, NSF will be available by phone to hear about any concerns and to address questions about NSF's role and the Section 106 consultation process. Further information about the February meeting is provided below:

Date: February 19, 2020
Location: 2420 Stevens Place, Richland WA
Time and teleconference option will be included on the agenda provided by DOE.

Upcoming Cultural Resource Survey

NSF has engaged a contractor, Jacobs Engineering, Inc., to perform the cultural resource survey that will be needed to identify any historic properties within the APE. We expect that the survey will occur in late February or the first part of March. We will be in touch, via email, with you and the tribes with the dates for the survey, as well as the survey methodology, so that you may provide input on how to adequately identify any historic properties within the APE. You are also invited to observe the survey.

In summary, please review this preliminary information on the proposed LExC, and provide us with any comments you may have on the proposed APE on or before **Friday, February 21, 2020**. Comments should be forwarded via email to Kristen Hamilton at krihamil@nsf.gov. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 703-292-4592 or by email at cblanco@nsf.gov. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Caroline M. Blanco

Caroline M. Blanco
Federal Preservation Officer
Assistant General Counsel
National Science Foundation

Cc (via email): Warren Hurely and So Yon Bedlington, DOE
Rob Whitlam, SHPO
Arrow Coyote, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Bambi Rodriguez, Nathan May, and Teara Farrow Ferman, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Mike Sobotta, Josiah Pinkman, Lucy Samuels, Jared Norman, and Jessica Glindeman, Nez Perce Tribe
Rose Ferri, and Laurene Contreras, Yakama Nation
Rex Buck and Alyssa Buck, Wanapum
Keith Mendez, MSA Cultural Resources, Cultural Resource Program Database Manager for the Hanford Site

Attachments:

- Proposed LExC site overview
- Proposed LExC site plan
- Proposed APE