



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 14, 2008

Dr. Sherry Hutt, Manager
National NAGPRA Program
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW (2253)
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: RIN 1024-AD68

Dear Dr. Hutt:

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) submits the attached comments regarding the Department of Interior's proposed rule, published October 16, 2007, on the disposition of culturally unidentifiable human remains (CUHR) under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

As you know, SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to the research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 7,200 members, SAA represents professional archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has members in all 50 states as well as many other nations around the world.

The comments come in two sections. In the first, SAA re-iterates its long-standing and strongly held position that neither the language nor the legislative history of NAGPRA grants the Department the authority to promulgate regulations concerning this section of the statute. The second section explains how the proposed regulations exceed the authority granted by the statute and contradict both the intent of the law and the mechanisms it established to achieve its goals.

In short, SAA believes that the proposed rules are illegal, and if implemented would destroy NAGPRA's carefully-constructed compromise between multiple perspectives that has made so much progress over the last seventeen years. SAA calls on the Department to withdraw the draft regulations, and urges the National NAGPRA Review Committee to begin a comprehensive series of consultations in order to develop a set of CUHR recommendations for Congress that all stakeholders can support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Show", written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

Dean R. Show,
President