

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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March 13, 2012

Captain C. R. Pietras
Program Manager, Navy Inactive Ships Program, PMS 333
Department of the Navy
Naval Sea Systems Command
1333 Isaac Hull Avenue
Washington Navy Yard DC 20376-2701

Re: *Project review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Antiquities Code of Texas, permanent dry berthing for the Battleship TEXAS, Houston, Harris County, Texas (Navy/106/SAL, THC Track 201207049)*

Dear Captain Pietras,

Thank you for your correspondence describing the above referenced project. This letter serves as comment on the proposed undertaking from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission, which is also the agency responsible for administering the Antiquities Code of Texas.

The review staff, led by Elizabeth Butman, William McWhorter, and Mark Denton, has completed its review of the information provided, which was received on February 27, 2012. For the proposed construction of a permanent dry berth for the Battleship TEXAS, the Navy proposes an Area of Potential Effect (APE) encompassing the battleship, the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site, and locations across the Houston Ship Channel from which the battleship would be visible. Per our discussion at the January 26 and March 6, 2012 consulting parties meetings for this project, we understand that in addition to direct effects, the proposed APE takes into account the visual effect of the dry berthing project at various locations proposed within Texas Parks and Wildlife Department-owned land at the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site, as well as other indirect effects, including changes in visitor patterns that may result from the project. The updated APE received on February 27 encompasses the established boundaries of the San Jacinto Battlefield National Historic Landmark as well as a boundary expansion proposed by the San Jacinto Battleground Conservancy, as reflected in their letter of January 30, 2012, and is broader than the initial APE proposed at the January 26 meeting. The Texas Historical Commission agrees that the proposed APE takes into consideration feedback received from the consulting parties and concurs with its use for this project.

Additionally, the Navy seeks concurrence that the proposed undertaking *may* alter the characteristics of the Battleship TEXAS and San Jacinto Battleground that qualify them for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, thereby constituting an adverse effect per 36 CFR 800.5. Many factors must be considered in a careful evaluation of the effects of this project on historic properties, including but not limited to the physical impact of the dry berthing on the battleship, construction impacts, and visual effects of the dry berth on the battleship, battleground, and any other historic properties identified within the APE. Additionally, further engineering and design development of dry berth Option 5 is currently underway, and alternative sites for the battleship may be proposed by consulting parties. Although there are presently many unknown factors, the Texas Historical Commission concurs that the proposed undertaking has the potential for adverse effect to historic properties.

The Battleship TEXAS is a National Historic Landmark (NHL), a National Mechanical Engineering Landmark, and a State Archeological Landmark (SAL) under the Antiquities Code of Texas. As indicated above, the San Jacinto Battlefield is also an NHL. Section 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that federal agencies, to the maximum extent possible, undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to any NHL that may be affected by an undertaking. To that end, we fully support efforts to avoid or minimize the effects of the project on



these highly significant historic properties and look forward to continuing to work with your office, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the National Park Service, and the consulting parties for this undertaking, as well as the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, should they participate in consultation.

Thank you for your cooperation in this federal and state review process, and for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas. We look forward to further consultation with your office and hope to maintain a partnership that will foster effective historic preservation. **If you have any questions concerning our review or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Elizabeth Butman at 512/463-6167.**

Sincerely,



A. Elizabeth Butman, State Coordinator for Project Review
For: Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer

MW/aeb

Cc: Tuwana Cummings, U.S. Naval Sea Systems Command
Michael Strutt, Director, Cultural Resources Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Neil Thomas, Project Manager, Infrastructure Division, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Christine Whitacre, Program Manager, Heritage Partnerships Program, National Park Service
James S. Poles, Environmental Project Manager, U.S. Naval Sea Systems Command, *via email*
Janet Wagner, Chair, Harris County Historical Commission, *via email*
Bruce Bramlett, Executive Director, Battleship TEXAS Foundation, *via email*
Chad Burke, CEO, Economic Alliance, Houston Port Region, *via email*
Jeff Nilsson, Executive Director, Historic Naval Ships Association, *via email*
Garry McMahan, Program Manager, Port of Houston Authority, *via email*
Jan DeVault, President, San Jacinto Battleground Conservancy, *via email*
Casey Borowski, Director, San Jacinto Historical District, *via email*
Larry Spasic, President, San Jacinto Museum of History Association, *via email*
Ronald Brown, President, Sons of the Republic of Texas, San Jacinto Chapter, *via email*
Tammie Nielsen, District Director, State Representative Ken Legler, *via email*
Jeff Dunn, consulting party, *via email*
John R. Ward, consulting party, *via email*
Admiral Will Fisher, Texas Navy Association, *via email*
Nancy T. Burch, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, San Jacinto Chapter, *via email*
Tony Gregory, Chairman, Battleship TEXAS Foundation, *via email*
Cecil Jones, Board of Directors, San Jacinto Battleground Conservancy, *via email*
Amanda Peters, Chief of Staff, State Representative Wayne Smith, *via email*
Andy Smith, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, *via email*
Russell Kuykendall, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, *via email*
Scott Triebes, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, *via email*
Justin Rhodes, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, *via email*
Patty Matthews, AECOM, *via email*
Leslie Pampa, Crouch Environmental Services, Inc., *via email*