



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

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August 5, 2022

Andre Sivels
Agency Records Officer
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Andre Sivels,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) report dated June 21, 2022, regarding the emergency destruction of nitrate film records, spanning from 1891-1951, from the National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service (NESDIS) and National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI).

NARA understands that since nitrate film is highly flammable, emits noxious gas, and is characterized as hazardous material, NOAA had to quickly dispose of the records as they posed a menace to health, life and property. However, as a reminder should a similar circumstance occur in the future, NOAA must follow the process defined in 36 CFR 1229 for the emergency disposal of federal records. This process requires NARA to review and approve agency requests for emergency disposal if there is a continuing menace to human health, life or property before the federal records are actually destroyed.

Your report indicates that a NCEI archivist created a list of all potentially nitrate-based microfilm, consisting of film containing records predating the cessation of nitrocellulose film production in 1951. Balancing the need to preserve as many records as possible against the risks of handling the microfilm, the archivist examined records with the highest-value to the designated community. Film confirmed to be acetate-based was removed from the disposal list, and the project as a whole. The remaining microfilm was disposed of according to Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Transportation regulations.

Based on the information provided, the reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14(a) have been met and this matter is now closed. Thank you for your commitment to improving your records management practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence N. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'B'.

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government