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43 **STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION**
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45 The Port of Seattle is committed to the increased participation of small businesses, the provision
46 of quality jobs, and the development of a diverse and skilled workforce that can support regional
47 economic vitality. The Commission has long viewed Initiative 200 as a challenge to that mission,
48 and first adopted a Commission Resolution opposing the Initiative in 1998, when it was due to
49 be considered on the statewide ballot. Following that vote, commissioners have traveled to
50 Olympia in each of the past four legislative sessions to testify alongside representatives from the
51 City of Seattle and King County in support of repealing Initiative 200.
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53 In the 2019 Legislative Session, Washington voters presented the State Legislature with an
54 “Initiative to the Legislature” that sought to amend RCW 49.60.400, put in place originally by the
55 passage of Initiative 200. That effort, known as Initiative 1000, gave the legislators three options:
56 adopt the measure as drafted; put forward an alternative and have both I-1000 and that
57 alternative measure considered side-by-side on the ballot; or take no action, and send the
58 initiative as written to the ballot. After much deliberation, and a public hearing that lasted nearly
59 an entire day and featured testimony from all three living former Governors, the Legislature
60 voted to pass I-1000 as written. With that vote, the prohibition in the granting of preference that
61 I-200 put in place was officially repealed. However, the I-200 advocates immediately began to
62 gather signatures for a referendum that could overturn that legislative action, and that gave rise
63 to Referendum 88, up for a vote in this November’s election.
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65 On January 8, 2018, the Port of Seattle Commission officially adopted its new Diversity in
66 Contracting policy. That policy seeks to increase opportunities for women and minority-owned
67 business entities (WMBEs) across Port operations. The policy is designed to increase both the
68 percent of contracting dollars paid to WMBE firms as well as the number of WMBE firms under
69 contract. It requires divisions and departments within the Port to set goals for WMBE utilization,
70 created a WMBE inclusion plan pilot, and supports prompt payment for WMBE firms that work
71 with the Port.
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73 Meanwhile, in December 2017, the Commission moved to establish a Priority Hire policy that will
74 ensure better access to training programs and well-paying construction jobs for local workers,
75 particularly those from economically distressed areas. That effort also sets as a goal the increased
76 the diversity of the workforce on Port construction projects and focuses on workforce
77 participation by apprentices and journey-level construction workers. The policy will require
78 contractors on large Port construction projects to hire more local apprentices from under-
79 represented zip codes.
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81 In 2014, the Port of Seattle completed a disparity study to learn more about its successes and
82 challenges as an organization in the area of WMBE contracting. The study found disparity in Port
83 utilization of minority contractors for construction and construction-related projects was
84 substantially below what might be expected based on the availability of those contractors. The
85 study also concluded that all categories of minority-owned businesses displayed utilization rates

86 that were below parity, recommended overall the Port make efforts to ensure that mechanisms
87 for monitoring future performance and utilization of those contractors were enforced. The study
88 allowed the Port to request from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) which granted the
89 authorization to implement a “race-conscious” DBE program for federally assisted projects.

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91 That study informed the work being done under the Priority Hire and Diversity in Contracting
92 policies. It also helps to inform the work being done by the Port’s newly formed Office of
93 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. But it is all made more challenging by the state law put into place
94 by the 1998 passage of I-200.

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96 Passage of I-1000, which can be sustained by voters through the approval of Referendum 88, and
97 the amendment of 49.60.400 (I-200), will allow the Port greater flexibility as we advance our
98 mission of supporting broad-based and diverse economic development, and ensuring that the
99 growing prosperity of the Puget Sound region is shared by all communities equally.

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101 **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ATTACHED**

102 Full text of Referendum 88, as submitted to the Washington Secretary of State