



**COMMISSION  
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**Item No.** 10b

**ACTION ITEM**

**Date of Meeting** September 9, 2025

**DATE:** September 2, 2025

**TO:** Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

**FROM:** Eric Schinfeld, Senior Manager, Federal & International Government Relations

**SUBJECT: Introduction of Resolution No. 3838: Amending the Welcoming Port Policy Directive**

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Request Commission introduction of Resolution 3838, a resolution of the Port of Seattle Commission establishing a revised Welcoming Port Policy Directive and amending Resolution No. 3747, in order to demonstrate the Port's ongoing commitment to supporting immigrants, refugees, and international visitors in line with the Port's mission and values.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Port of Seattle Commission first adopted its Welcoming Port Policy Directive as Resolution No. 3747 on May 8, 2018 as a way to affirm the Port of Seattle's commitment to the safety, inclusion, and engagement of immigrants, refugees, and international visitors who interact with our facilities or services. For the Port, this is not only a deeply held value, but also an economic imperative – given how much our facilities rely on both a workforce that includes immigrants as well as international cargo and international passengers.

Since that time, the Port has fully implemented this directive and developed numerous deep partnerships with community groups and organizations to continue expanding the ways in which Port facilities can be welcoming to immigrants, refugees and foreign visitors. In addition, in 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed the Keep Washington Working Act, which made numerous changes to state law for the stated purpose of “ensuring the state of Washington remains a place where the rights and dignity of all residents are maintained and protected in order to keep Washington working.” The Port has fully complied with these mandates.

Given recent changes in federal immigration policies, programs, and practices, the Port Commission seeks to update and expand its strategies to respond to current events and new challenges to the Port's Welcoming Port vision. The Port of Seattle values the work of our federal partners to keep our facilities safe, and nothing in this Policy Directive is intended to impede the travel facilitation work of federal personnel like U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Transportation Security Administration. However, the Port believes strongly that it can continue to uphold its values; be safe and secure; comply with all federal law; and simultaneously be

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welcoming, accessible to all, and supportive of those immigrants, refugees, and foreign visitors who use our facilities.

**DETAILS**

The updated 2025 Welcoming Port Policy Directive aims to advance the following five (5) goals while remaining in accordance with local, state and federal law and within its authority and resources:

- 1) The Port will do everything within its power and resources to make all visitors to its facilities feel welcome, safe, and comfortable when accessing services, benefits, and opportunities.
- 2) The Port will not deny anyone services based on immigration status – whether they are travelers, local residents, or employees of the Port, its tenants, its vendors, or its contractors.
- 3) The Port will take advantage of the broad and diverse resources that already exist in the Puget Sound region to create and enhance partnerships with local immigrant and refugee community stakeholders, advocates, and community-based organizations to identify new or expanded opportunities, where possible, to advance the Port's goals of being a welcoming gateway.
- 4) The Port will prohibit any Port employees, including Port law enforcement officers, from asking about place of birth, citizenship, or immigration status or collecting information on place of birth, citizenship, or immigration status, and information about family members, except when required by a criminal investigation.
- 5) The Port will not use its resources to facilitate the enforcement of civil immigration law.

To implement this vision, the Port will comply with the following policies:

***A. Limits on Port Data Collection***

- 1) Related to visitors to Port facilities, applicants for Port grants, and participants in Port programs: All applications, questionnaires, and forms used in relation to the provision of Port opportunities or services shall not include required disclosure of information related to place of birth, citizenship or immigration status.
- 2) Related to travelers through air and cruise gateways: The Port is committed to non-discrimination, data privacy, and the dignity of all travelers, regardless of immigration status. Port employees are prohibited from collecting or sharing the immigration status of travelers.
- 3) Related to Port law enforcement personnel: Consistent with the Keep Washington Working Act, Port law enforcement is prohibited from collecting information about immigration or citizenship data unless there is a demonstrated connection between such information and an investigation into a violation of state or local criminal law. Port law

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enforcement is also prohibited from providing information pursuant to notification requests from federal immigration authorities for the purposes of civil immigration enforcement.

*B. Interpretation and Translation:*

- 1) Commission Order 2023-05 directs the creation of a Language Access Policy. This policy ensures access to translation and interpretation services, as both a value of the Port as well as an essential business requirement. Therefore, to ensure that everyone who engages with the Port feels welcome, the Port will strive to provide free interpretation and translation services for the most prevalent languages spoken in our region. This effort applies to Port employees, job seekers, participants in Port programs, and travelers through our facilities. In addition, the Port will offer access to its translation and interpretation services to federal agencies operating in our facilities, to ensure that their interactions are fully understood by all travelers.
- 2) The Port employs a large number of bilingual and multilingual staff members who assist travelers and members of the public with language interpretation needs on a regular basis, particularly related to travel through our facilities. Bilingual and multilingual staff members may assist travelers and members of the public with language interpretation needs related to basic immigration resources, while ensuring professional interpreters are engaged in issues related to civil immigration law or other sensitive topics beyond their professional expertise.

*C. Compliance with Keep Washington Working and Prohibiting the Use of Port Resources for Immigration Enforcement:*

- 1) The Port will continue to ensure that all employees – including Port law enforcement officers – are committed to welcoming and respectful treatment of immigrants, refugees, and foreign visitors. Consistent with the Keep Washington Working Act, Port law enforcement officers, including both Port of Seattle Police officers and any law enforcement officers contracted by the Port, are prohibited from initiating police action based solely on an individual's place of birth, citizenship, or immigration status, or using stops for minor offenses or requests for voluntary information as a pretext for discovering a person's immigration status.
- 2) Furthermore, no Port employee shall expend time, money, or other resources on facilitating the civil enforcement of federal immigration law or participating in civil immigration enforcement operations, except where required by state or federal law, regulation, or a court order.

*D. Detainees:*

- 1) The Port will continue to defer immigration detainer requests from ICE or CBP to King County Jail or SCORE, as the Port does not manage a correctional facility. The Port will comply with the Keep Washington Working Act and will not enter into any contract, agreement, or arrangement that would grant federal civil immigration enforcement authority or power over the Port or its law enforcement officers; nor will Port law

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enforcement carry out a civil arrest based on an administrative warrant separately or in combination with an ICE or CBP detainer request.

- 2) The Port will continue to share its expectations that – when individuals are detained by CBP in the International Arrivals Facility or are being transported through our facilities by federal law enforcement officers– these individuals will have full access to their legal rights and are receiving all federally required and otherwise appropriate treatment.

*E. Partnerships:*

- 1) The Port will work in collaboration with local immigration services, refugee resettlement organizations, and community-based organizations to explore additional ways to use its facilities to support immigrant and refugee communities, including: providing access to information for travelers; potential partnerships on workforce development and economic development; and facilitating refugee arrivals through SEA. In addition, the Port will continue to partner with local organizations to support immigration and citizenship application efforts, including by providing a list of existing resources for individuals who need services that the Port cannot provide, such as access to legal resources.

*F. Safe and Welcoming Workplace:*

- 1) The Port remains steadfastly opposed to harassment and discrimination in our workplace. Port Policy CC-8 – Anti-Harassment prohibits harassment against any employee, including based on national origin or any related characteristic.
- 2) The Port’s immigration-related policies and protocols shall be fully integrated into all relevant aspects of Port operations and administration – including the development of appropriate training programs for Port employees.

*G. Employee Responses to Federal Immigration Policy and Enforcement:*

- 1) The Port prohibits employees from providing federal immigration officials with information about individuals or any other non-public information, or assisting in accessing an area restricted to Port employees or tenants. However, Port employees should not interfere with immigration officials or immigration enforcement actions.
- 2) The Port has developed its Employee Guidance on Immigration training, which includes proper protocols to respond to requests from federal immigration enforcement and to travelers or other visitors to Port facilities seeking guidance related to immigration.

*H. Program Implementation and Evaluation.*

- 1) The Port will formally establish an Immigration Working Group composed of key staff members from throughout the organization. This Working Group will serve as a central point of contact for connecting a broad group of stakeholders to identify, elevate, and develop shared strategies and solutions; streamline and strengthen efforts; and address the most pressing issues related to this topic. The Working Group will have oversight of relevant communications, new program development, and monitoring of this Policy Directive. The Executive Director may disband the working group at their discretion when

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it is no longer needed. The Working Group shall include the Commission President, or their delegate, as an ex officio member of the committee.

- 2) Within three (3) months of the passage of this policy, the Port will create a centralized tracking system to record immigration-related interactions with individuals or federal agencies. This data will be used to identify patterns, training needs, or compliance issues. A summary of these interactions, stripped of identifying details, shall be provided to the Commission no later than six (6) months from the date this tracking system is implemented.
- 3) By December 31, 2025, the Executive Director shall report to the Commission on the implementation and estimated cost of these policies, procedures, and programs.
- 4) Annually, the Executive Director shall empower key staff to conduct a review of Port actions to ensure that staff continue to comply fully with this directive.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

To the extent the Welcoming Port Policy Directive has financial implications, these will be identified and evaluated annually for inclusion in applicable Port of Seattle operating budget proposals to the Port of Seattle Commission.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- (1) Resolution No. 3838 – Amendment to Welcoming Port Policy Directive
- (2) Presentation

**PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

None