



September 30, 2013

Mayor Mike McGinn
City of Seattle
700 5th Ave, Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Re: Comments on the Draft EIS for Proposed Seattle Arena

Dear Mayor McGinn:

After reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the proposed SoDo arena, the Port of Seattle Commission remains deeply concerned that this project is a threat to middle-class jobs -- in Seattle, but also throughout the region. As an agency charged with creating opportunity and family-wage job growth, the Port of Seattle believes that it is a profound mistake to trade middle-class employment and a diversified tax base for the indeterminate economic value of an additional sports and concert venue in the city.

The long-term health of our city's maritime and industrial jobs base is at stake. These businesses and jobs are what help anchor our urban middle class. Fifty thousand people work in SoDo every day. The state's manufacturers and agricultural producers depend on this area to get \$10 billion in products to markets across the country and around the world. The economic impacts that must be considered ripple way beyond SoDo. Seattle's manufacturing and industrial businesses provide more than one-third of the city's sales tax receipts and B&O tax revenue. Not only are arena proponents risking SoDo's full-time, middle class jobs, they are also gambling with city finances.

To be sure, the Port Commission remains a solid supporter of the prospect of NBA basketball and NHL hockey coming to the region. We do believe that in the right venue, these sports franchises would attract more tourism and economic activity to our community. But we conclude that the cost of an arena in the proposed SoDo location is simply too high when considering the impact on the middle class. We must seriously consider other locations that

maximize the benefits of an arena while minimizing the economic impacts on our community, something this DEIS fails to do.

This DEIS erroneously approaches the issue as though this arena is a private project, rather than a public project that will receive \$200 million in taxpayer financing and, after construction, be owned by the public. For public projects, the city is required under the law to consider a broader range of alternatives and should have considered sites outside Seattle. Instead, the arena proponents seem prepared to use millions of dollars in public financing for a private purpose while hoping to avoid consideration of the full range of alternative sites. Frankly, the analysis before us describes numerous benefits of the arena, but fails to acknowledge obvious costs to the public. This DEIS was a cursory review of the impacts an additional sports venue would have on existing activities in SoDo. The analysis of alternative arena sites was biased in favor of the SoDo site. This ignores precedents established during planning and construction of Safeco and CenturyLink, and does the public a disservice.

The DEIS acknowledges that the competitive position of the port and maritime businesses could be diminished due to traffic concerns, but the impact is not reasonably quantified and no remedy is specified. The estimated additional impact – 4 minutes per truck – is so narrowly defined that it lacks all credibility. Existing data show that current stadium traffic does lead to congestion. Before a Friday night Mariners' game, the Washington State Department of Transportation has identified an increase of westbound I-90 traffic of 20 to 30 percent between 3pm and 5pm. Area businesses, schools and communities are struggling with the current level of congestion. Regional leaders continue to work to shore up our fragile transportation and transit systems.

Despite the impacts we know will occur, the funds needed to address those impacts have not been adequately identified to prevent job losses at existing businesses. We know the public cost to reduce these traffic impacts will be enormous, even hundreds of millions of dollars. The DEIS suggests an incomplete list of transportation mitigation options, but does not identify necessary funding or demonstrate they provide a remedy. The city may need new signal timing investments, new highway access and new east-west vehicle and pedestrian overpasses to relieve the additional pressure. The 17 rail tracks immediately adjacent to the site are broadly acknowledged to be a serious safety concern to families attending arena events. Who pays for transportation improvements remains an open question.

Finally, we do not see the need to rush forward with a decision on an arena. Several larger reviews are underway to support this area's continued prosperity. We can use these analytical insights to inform smart, collaborative approaches to SoDo's current challenges, which will only worsen if we add a new arena to the mix. Also, to move forward with an Occidental Avenue street vacation and begin construction of a new arena is premature. The NBA has said they are

not contemplating expansion and the developer has no firm prospect of luring an existing team from another city.

We urge the city to begin the process anew. We must start over with a full consideration of the cumulative and secondary impacts on existing economic activities in our city, region and state. We must view this issue through the lens of the single largest challenge of our generation – the growth of middle-class jobs.

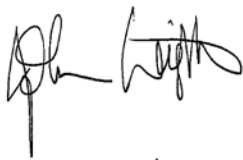
The community we all represent is served by a cooperative relationship between the city and port. We resolve to ensure that this project undergoes a full and complete review of the environmental and economic impacts. We look forward to working with the city to promote SoDo as home to family-wage jobs in manufacturing and maritime industries. We know you share our community's priority to promote long-term economic growth and workforce diversity in Seattle.

Sincerely,

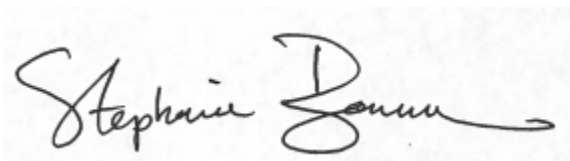
Port of Seattle Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Albro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Commissioner Tom Albro, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Creighton". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long vertical stroke at the end.

Commissioner John Creighton, Vice President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Bowman". The signature is cursive and clearly legible, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Commissioner Stephanie Bowman



Commissioner Bill Bryant



Commissioner Courtney Gregoire

cc:

Seattle City Council

King County Executive Dow Constantine

King County Council

Governor Jay Inslee

Don "Bud" Hover, Director, Washington State Department of Agriculture

Brian Bonlender, Director, Washington State Department of Commerce

State Representative Judy Clibborn

State Senator Tracey Eide

State Senator Curtis King

John Shaw, Seattle Department of Planning and Development