

**MOTION  
OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION  
PROVIDING FUNDING IN SUPPORT OF A PROPOSED  
STUDY OF ULTRAFINE PARTICULATE MATTER  
CONCENTRATION RESULTING FROM AVIATION  
ACTIVITIES**

**APPROVED  
FEBRUARY 28, 2017**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

The Port Commission hereby affirms its intention to provide up to \$75,000 in funding support, in partnership with contributions from the State of Washington and airport-area cities, for a study of the concentrations of ultrafine particulate matter as described in House Bill 1171, and as directed by the Department of Commerce. The substitute amendment to HB 1171 that was adopted by the House Environment Committee on February 9, 2017, reflects changes that were suggested by Port staff in collaboration with researchers from the University of Washington, and enjoys the support of the Port of Seattle Commission. Further, the Commission is interested in working with the bill sponsor to ensure that language in the bill focuses on ultrafine particulate matter. Further, the Commission affirms its interest in remaining engaged with the legislature, the Department of Commerce, the partner cities, and academic researchers as the study scope is under development.

**STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION**

Airport communities have expressed concern to the Port of Seattle Commission about potential pollution resulting from aviation activities at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac).

Public meetings and open houses over the last year have included comments from residents of those airport communities reflecting growing concern with pollution impacts as projected air traffic at Sea-Tac is expected to increase.

There has been only a modest amount of academic research conducted to date on ultrafine particulate matter related to aviation activities. Those studies that have been conducted have not led to any academic, peer-reviewed study that seeks to draw conclusions about human health outcomes related to ultrafine particulate exposures related to aviation activities.

In meetings convened by State Representative Tina Orwall (D – 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative District) over the past year, port staff and commissioners have engaged with community members and elected leaders to discuss the need for additional information on the impact of aviation activities in the Puget Sound region to the environment.

Due to the absence of published, peer-reviewed studies on the current impacts of ultrafine particulate matter resulting from aviation activities in the Puget Sound region, Representative Orwall and community members from Beacon Hill to Burien indicated their interest in pursuing legislation at the state level that would require a state-led study on issues relating to air quality and aviation.

In that time period, both port staff and some members of the Port of Seattle Commission expressed an openness to participate in a conversation about the potential air quality impacts of aviation activities. Representatives from the King County International Airport (also known as Boeing Field) participated in at least one of the meetings convened by Rep. Orwall on this topic.

In January 2017, Representative Orwall introduced House Bill 1917, a bill that directs the Department of Commerce to conduct a study of the “air quality implications of air traffic at the international airport in Washington with the highest number of total annual departures and arrivals.”

The legislation indicates that the study would consist of two phases, the first of which would be completed by the University of Washington school of public health, and would assess “concentrations of ultrafine particulate matter in areas surrounding and directly impacted by air traffic generated at the airport.” The second phase was to be completed directly after the first, and would consider mitigation options, analysis of exposure to low-income residents, scope of risks posed by air traffic relative to other sources of air pollution, and other “direct and indirect” environmental impacts.

Following an initial hearing on the bill at the House Environment Committee, Port of Seattle staff worked with staff from the House Environment Committee, researchers from the University of Washington school of public health, and Representative Orwall, on changes to the legislation that would improve the feasibility of the study and the data that would result. Rep. Orwall accepted these changes, the primary focus of which was updating phase one to include an analysis of the current gaps in data that exist in this field of study. The amendment also calls on the Department of Commerce to report to the legislature as to whether a second phase is appropriate based on information gathered in phase one.

Port of Seattle Commissioners, in individual conversations with staff regarding changes to the bill, indicated their support for the substitute amendment. Following adoption of an additional amendment, adding a requirement that the study conducted by the University of Washington also include “barium, aluminum, radioactive thorium, cadmium, chromium, and ethylene dibromide” port staff expressed concern to Rep. Orwall that those chemicals are not related to aviation activities, and therefore would be beyond what we considered the scope of the study. Rep. Orwall agreed, and indicated her intention to remove those chemicals from the final study language.

Given the importance of this issue to the airport communities and the environment overall, and the collaborative spirit with which Rep. Orwall has led this process, the Commission supports the State of Washington moving forward with the study.

With leadership from the State Department of Commerce, funding through the state legislature, and additional funding that has been pledged by various cities in close proximity to Sea-Tac Airport, the Port of Seattle would add its contribution to an important state-led, community effort.

#### **STATEMENT OF POLICY DIRECTION**

The Commission hereby directs staff to work with the State Department of Commerce, Representative Tina Orwall, and representatives from airport communities, to make funding available for participation in a study of the concentration of ultrafine particulate matter resulting from aviation activities in the Puget Sound region.

The Commission directs staff to fund the study at a level of up to \$75,000, a level intended to match the potential combined contribution of airport cities, and to complement funding made available by the State of Washington.

The Commission further directs staff to transmit its intention to support the proposed study of ultrafine particulates to those state legislators who are working to advance this issue through the State Legislature.