

**PROCLAMATION
OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE
COMMISSION**

WHEREAS, Black history is American history and throughout every stage of the U.S., Black Americans have led the fight for equity and justice, re-shaping culture and laws towards a multi-racial democracy that was promised at the founding of this country; and

WHEREAS, centering racial equity and specifically our commitment to confronting anti-black racism at the Port of Seattle sets an intentional, strategic focus that will allow us to develop structural approaches to address all forms of oppression and to advance our inclusion and belonging values as a public agency; and

WHEREAS, our vision is to develop a Port that mirrors — throughout its breadth of operations and services and within its leadership structure — the diversity of our community, instills principles of equity in its culture, and ensures a fair and intentional distribution of opportunities with the goal of expanding economic development and quality of life for all; and

WHEREAS, the Port of Seattle acknowledges the profound impact of Black leaders on the legacy, history, art, and economic fabric of King County, recognizing their invaluable contributions remains paramount, with a special focus during this Black History Month on prioritizing the elevation of these local heroes; and

WHEREAS, established in 1993 at the Port of Seattle, Blacks In Government (BIG) is an Employee Resource Group (ERG) dedicated to advocating for equal opportunity, eliminating racism and discrimination, and promoting professional development for Blacks in Government during Black History Month and throughout the year; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, the Washington State Legislature House of Representatives renamed the county to Martin Luther King County, and in 2007, Councilmember Gossett led the campaign to adopt the King County logo featuring Martin Luther King County making it the sole governmental entity in the nation to showcase Dr. King's likeness in its logo; and

WHEREAS, the Port of Seattle Commission took action in November 2020 to establish Juneteenth as a Port paid holiday, cementing the importance of Juneteenth, otherwise known as Black Independence Day, and celebrated by the Port under the leadership of BIG since 2003; and

WHEREAS, the theme for Black History Month 2024 is "African Americans and the Arts." This theme highlights the influence and innovation of African Americans in all fields of art, including music, dance, theater, visual arts, and literature; and

WHEREAS, the arts have, and continue to, provide an avenue for expression and visibility for Black voices of those who have historically, and currently, been underrepresented, unseen, diminished, and silenced; and

WHEREAS, our region boasts world renowned artists like musicians Jimi Hendrix and The Black Tones, jazz and blues singer Ernestine Anderson, musician and producer Quincy Jones, painters James W. Washington, Jr. and Jacob Lawrence, artists Barbara Earl Thomas and Marita Dingus, photographer Al Smith, writer Ijeoma Oluo, culinary artists chefs Kristi Brown and Ariel Bangs, and home to the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute and the Black and Tan Hall; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, Hamdi Mohamed's election as Commission President marks the first time in the Port's 112-year history that a woman of color, specifically a Black woman and immigrant, holds this position; and

WHEREAS, the Port Commission and BIG are proud to present Eddie Rye with a Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize Mr. Rye's inspiring decades-long track record of activism and community organizing on behalf of Black people in Washington State and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the Port Commission and BIG are proud to present Kristi Brown with a Business Excellence Award for her business' outstanding community impact and inclusive business practices; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Equity Diversity and Inclusion was established in 2019 to recognize the cultural shift at the Port of Seattle by identifying and addressing the root causes of inequities, and to promote fairness toward equity and anti-racism and does so in partnership BIG and other ERGs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Port of Seattle Commission hereby proclaims February as Black History Month and honors and commends the recipients of the Lifetime Achievement and Business Excellence awards for their commitment to advancing equity for all.

Proclaimed by the Port of Seattle Commission this 27th day of February, 2024.

Port of Seattle Commission