

Hi, I'm Cynthia Spiess, an independent security researcher and Seattle resident. My comments are regarding agenda item 8a, Motion 2019-13.

Facial recognition of all International travelers is not justified and is mass surveillance. Claiming it will be voluntary for U.S. citizens is fictitious at best. There is currently no signage making it clear to U.S. citizens that they don't have to provide fingerprints and mug shots when traveling Internationally (I had to specifically ask about this.) Body scanners are supposedly voluntary but most of the public doesn't know that, no signage makes that clear, and TSA staff are consistently unprepared for such requests, especially for disabled individuals (with Sea-Tac being the worst of the airports I traveled while temporarily disabled). Even if there was federal law requiring gathering of biometric data on all travelers, that data should only be gathered by the respective government agency, not private companies.

Biometric data should not be taken lightly like it is in the motion. At least in a data breach of credit card numbers or passwords the victims can get new cards or generate new passwords. You only have one face. This data will be security breached. What is the recourse for those victims? What is the liability to the Port when such breach happens?

Facial recognition technology has been shown by academic researchers to have racial and gender biases. Specifically the accuracy rate is lower for darker-skinned and female individuals compared to lighter-skinned and male individuals.

Moreover, this motion has failed to consider the variety and diversity of perspectives that impact these workflows in practice, such as: How is it ensured that those who don't speak English as their first language know their full rights regarding biometric data at the Port? What about elderly and/or disabled individuals who can't see signage or hear verbal directions? What about individuals who face ingrained social & cultural viewpoints that make dissent (aka opting-out) difficult or even dangerous, even when they desire it? For example, every time I opt out of body scanners, my heart is racing, I'm sweating, and I'm scared; and I've done nothing wrong - have no criminal record and am white. The system is not designed to make opting out truly an option for everyone.

More and more cities are adopting facial recognition bans. The public doesn't want this technology. The Port of Seattle would be taking a step backwards if they allowed the use of this technology. The Port should prohibit themselves and all tenants of the Port (such as airlines & cruise ships) from gathering biometric data of U.S. citizens. If the Port does allow this technology, then it is akin to letting people pee in the pool. It will not be contained.

