

## Commission-Public-Records

**From:** Elena Perez <elena@pugetsoundsage.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 10, 2019 9:55 AM  
**To:** Commission-Public-Records  
**Cc:** Elena Perez  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment: Biometric Technology at Port of Seattle

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Dear Commissioners,

We appreciate your deliberation and examination of biometrics at SeaTac Airport, including the study sessions, guidelines and proposal for a workgroup. However, we firmly believe that the impact of biometrics to communities of color, immigrants and refugees has not been fully explored, and you have not yet received substantive feedback from the public on this issue. As such, we urge you to not take further action until you hold a public hearing and test assumptions being made by proponents of the technology before they are implemented.

Sage has a long track record of advocacy for the right of immigrants and refugees at the Port of Seattle, including port truck drivers, communities of color impacted by port-generated air pollution, and low-wage airport workers. Historically, the Port has typically stood up for these stakeholders only after a fight, and usually after Port officials claim change is not possible and Commissioners acquiesce. We note that change has always been possible with creativity and political will. We are asking you today to stand up for the people who will inevitably be harmed by unregulated use of biometrics – before it is implemented at SeaTac Airport, and not after.

We know that the Commission is deeply concerned about biometrics and recognize both the risk to individuals and to whole communities. We also understand that there is some “inevitability” about development and use of biometric technology, especially under the leadership of the current administration. But we believe that drawing a bright line on use of biometrics at one of the busiest airports in the nation can have both local and national benefits. As such, Sage recommends the following specific steps:

1. Cease tacit approval of current and future use of biometrics until adequate exploration of equity impacts has been done. This includes holding off on the proposed motion.
2. Form a working group in first quarter of 2020 to:
  1. inventory all current use of biometric technology at our port, past pilots of customer-facing biometrics, and near-term (5 yr.) proposals for new and expanded use of biometrics;
  2. audit all of these programs (past, present and future) based on the seven principles offered by the Commission, and report back to the Commissioners the results.
3. Conduct a public hearing to report on the findings and hear from local workers, travelers, residents, impacted communities, and data privacy/civil liberties experts on questions, concerns and recommendations for future regulations with regard to biometrics.
4. Establish rules for use of biometrics in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter that can be embedded in all Port operating and lease agreements with its airlines and tenants.

SeaTac Airport is a critical resource to the region, to all of our communities, and to individuals who need air travel for work and family. Use of biometric technology, however, is not critical to anyone. Instead of rushing to implement it and hope nothing goes wrong, we urge you to take extreme precaution in an effort to do no harm.

Sincerely,

**Elena Perez**

Coalition Organizing Director | Puget Sound Sage

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