

**PORT OF SEATTLE**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**COMMISSION AGENDA**  
**ACTION ITEM**

<b>Item No.</b>	<u>6a</u>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<u>May 8, 2012</u>

**DATE:** April 26, 2012  
**TO:** Tay Yoshitani, Chief Executive Officer  
**FROM:** Jane Kilburn, Director of Tourism Development  
**SUBJECT:** National Travel and Tourism Week

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Request the Port Commission to adopt a motion honoring National Travel and Tourism Week, May 5 – 13, 2012.

**SYNOPSIS:**

The first full week of May is annually recognized as National Travel and Tourism Week, a tradition first celebrated in 1984 under President Ronald Reagan. Its purpose is to champion the power of travel. As one of America's largest industries, travel and tourism generated \$1.9 trillion in economic output nationally last year. This year, President Obama has unveiled a national travel and tourism strategy and has urged policies and initiatives that would further economic growth and job creation in the industry, such as improving the entry experience at international airports, accelerating travel-related infrastructure projects and expanding the Visa Waiver Program. As a sector, travel and tourism is adding jobs back into this economy faster than other industries. One in nine workers in America depends on travel/tourism for their living.

Tourism matters to King County's and the state's economic prosperity as well. In Washington State alone, travel spending was \$16.4 billion in 2011, generating almost \$1 billion in local and state tax revenues, and supporting 150,900 jobs, with earnings/payroll of \$4.5 million.

In recognition of this vital industry and the Port's critical role in its success, the Century Agenda calls out tourism as one of its four pillars supporting the goal of adding 100,000 jobs to the region in the next 25 years.

**BACKGROUND:**

As the owner of the nation's 16<sup>th</sup> busiest airport and the West Coast's largest Alaska cruise port, and with many tenants in the travel and tourism business, tourism matters to the Port of Seattle. In support of the direct international flights at Sea-Tac Airport and the cruise business, the Port works in partnership with Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote tourism to the area from five international markets, an endeavor we embarked upon 28 years ago.

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The economic benefits of international tourism are well-documented, as these travelers stay longer and spend more money on their vacations than do domestic travelers. For every 35 international visitors, one job is created.

As stewards of the major gateway to the region by air and by sea, the Port Commission made a significant grant to the Washington Tourism Alliance in 2011 as a catalyst to others in supporting the WTA. Established to keep the tourism promotion momentum going when the State Office of Tourism was closed last summer, the WTA is the only official state-wide tourism promotion organization. The Port's funding last year was matched by memberships and corporate contributions. While the WTA is continuing to promote the state through a consumer website, printed travel guide and other materials, its volunteer board of directors is developing a plan for long-term, sustainable and industry-led tourism promotion funding.

Through its actions and support, the Port Commission has demonstrated a recognition of the value of tourism—our state's fourth largest export. In fact, one of the goals of the Century Agenda is to "Advance this region as a leading tourism destination and business gateway." By adding the Port's name to the nation-wide list of organizations recognizing National Tourism Week, we would reaffirm this sector's importance to our region and our Port.

### **OTHER DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS REQUEST:**

PowerPoint presentation

"Land of Dreams" video