

PORT OF SEATTLE
MEMORANDUM

COMMISSION AGENDA

Item No. 4c

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting September 22, 2015

DATE: August 13, 2015
TO: Ted Fick, Chief Executive Officer
FROM: Julie Collins, Senior Director, Public Affairs
Beth Osborne, Manager, Federal Government Relations
SUBJECT: Federal Government Advocacy contract

Est. Total Contract Cost: \$720,000 **Source of Funds:** Operating budget

ACTION REQUESTED:

Request Commission authorization for the Chief Executive Officer to execute a contract for federal government relations advocacy services for monitoring of federal legislation and regulatory activity, and acting on behalf of the Port at the Port's direction. The proposed contract term is a one-year contract with two, one-year options for an estimated total cost of \$720,000.

SYNOPSIS:

The Port of Seattle currently retains a federal government relations advocacy firm in Washington, D.C., to assist the full-time Port manager in addressing the significant number of federal actions that have a direct impact on the Port's organization and business operations. This firm acts as an advocate providing regular and consistent personal contact with the Pacific Northwest Congressional delegations, both members and staff, as well as regulatory agencies directly affecting Port operations. This memorandum requests authority to execute a contract with a federal government relations advocacy consultant to monitor legislative and regulatory activity in Washington, D.C., and to provide strategic guidance on federal policy and regulatory issues. The current contract for such services was competitively bid in 2012 and expires January 2016. There will be a robust competitive process for future federal advocacy services under the term of this contract.

PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK AND SCHEDULE:

The proposed scope of work is to assist Port staff in advancing federal government relations activities in Washington, D.C., and act on behalf of the Port at the Port's direction to promote and protect the Port's interest in federal matters. More specific duties will be to: monitor federal legislation and regulatory activity; represent the Port at meetings and serve as the Port's liaison with the Administration, Members of Congress, other federal agencies, and relevant industry associations; provide strategic guidance related to federal policy and regulatory issues; keep the Port updated on its activities; create strategies to advance Port issues before Congress and the Executive Branch; attend Congressional hearings, markups, and briefings on matters of interest to the Port; draft correspondence to federal entities and Members of Congress; write draft testimony and legislation; draft comments for the federal regulatory process; provide federal briefing materials as requested; and interact regularly with the Pacific Northwest Congressional delegations, committee staffs, and federal regulatory bodies.

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While this contract may be asked to perform federal advocacy work on behalf of the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), the scope of work for this contract is primarily focused on the Port of Seattle's federal agenda. The NWSA will issue a request for service for a separate advocacy contract. The firm selected to represent the port will be eligible to compete for both contracts.

This contract will be procured competitively and according to Port procedures. Public Affairs will work with the Office of Social Responsibility to determine small business opportunities. To increase competition, we will advertise the request for proposal broadly. Many qualified firms provide these types of services, and we are likely to receive a high number of applications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The estimated cost of the agreement is \$720,000 for three years. Services are estimated at \$240,000 per year. Charges to this contract will be from the Public Affairs department and will be included in annual budgets.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS:

Alternative 1: Do not hire a D.C.-based advocate. Although Port staff are well versed in most federal issues and are able to effectively direct the work of the contractor, they do not always have the specific knowledge necessary to represent the Port on an issue or do not have available capacity to perform the amount of work required for effective representation in Congress and the executive branch. Past experience shows the Port typically has had to hire specialized and highly skilled consultants resident in Washington, D.C., to perform this work most effectively. This is not the preferred alternative.

Alternative 2: Through a broadly advertised competitive process, hire a consultant to perform specialized and highly skilled advocacy services. Maintaining a regular presence in Washington, D.C., with a consultant firm assisting the Port not only in monitoring ongoing activity, but also in identifying opportunities such as funding for Port initiatives, and influencing the development of legislation and regulations. As both federal and state funding is affected by a downturn in revenues, it will be of increasing strategic benefit to have an informed, regular presence in Washington, D.C., to advocate for Port interests and to uniquely represent our needs in transportation funding, environmental regulation, trade regulation, maritime and aviation industry issues, and Port security. These advocacy efforts are essential to support of our mission to create jobs, stimulate economic development, promote industrial growth, and advance trade and commerce in King County, the Puget Sound region, and Washington state. **This is the preferred alternative.**

OTHER DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS REQUEST:

- None.

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS:

- None.