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May 8, 2018

Dear Port of Seattle Commissioners,

Today the Port of Seattle takes an important step in ensuring all visitors and residents feel welcome. By establishing a Welcoming Port Policy, Resolution 3747 sets important guidelines for how the Port of Seattle welcomes and supports refugees and immigrants, expands partnerships with community organizations and, most importantly, advances justice for immigrants and refugees in our community. As a global gateway, this is especially important. Nearly one in five Seattle residents is foreign born and more than 129 languages are spoken in Seattle Public Schools. Moreover, Seattle is among the top 20 metropolitan areas with the largest population of undocumented immigrants. I am proud to lend my strong support to Resolution 3747 and I applaud the Port of Seattle for taking a leadership role on this important issue.

Just over one year ago, our community and people across the country were challenged with an unconscionable ban on Muslim travelers, including long-time U.S. residents, from seven countries. People attempting to travel to the United States through SeaTac airport were stranded abroad; those who made it to SeaTac were detained and some were even put back on planes and sent away. Families were left to wonder if they would ever see their loved ones again. The ban, however, galvanized our community in profound ways.

Within hours of President Trump's ban, elected officials and outraged citizens gathered at SeaTac airport. I was proud to stand with Commissioner Gregoire, Governor Inslee and other members of Congress as we said "no" to the President's assault on the inclusive values so important to our region. Later that day—thanks to the courts—we halted implementation of the ban; later that week families started to be reunited.

Since President Trump announced his Muslim ban last January, the Port of Seattle has increased its efforts to protect the rights and quality of life for immigrants, refugees and foreign-born visitors. I applaud the Port for submitting an amicus brief opposing the Muslim ban, working to provide signage notifying travelers of their rights and speaking out for permanent legal protection for Dreamers.

Resolution 3747 augments important advocacy work underway both locally and nationally to support immigrants, refugees and foreign-born visitors. I look forward to working with the Port of Seattle and Commissioners as we strive to make Seattle a welcoming and supportive community for all residents. Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,



Pramila Jayapal
MEMBER OF CONGRESS