

**THE BRIEFING PROJECT – EPISODE 14 – ACCORDS
(OR, CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING)
November 27, 2018**

Thank you. I'm Steve Edmiston, here for The Briefing Project. I'm seeking to provide the briefing you asked for but did not receive last year from the FAA and your staff on the subject of community impacts from increased aircraft overflights.

In my last public comment – titled “The Lost Cause” – I introduced the “Port of Seattle Airport Neighbor Community Accords.” These ten accords are quite safely framed for you as policy priorities and specific actions that push the protection of human health and the environment in the airport neighbor communities beyond what is minimally required by law, and forward towards the “extent permitted by law” – the exact approach, even the exact phrasing, that you used in responding the immigration travel ban. The Accords are legal. They are within your authority. They are designed to reflect your choices. Your decision to adopt them is binary – not unlike Yoda’s famous line: “Do. Or do not. There is no try.” In this way, the Accords – how you adopt, reject, or ignore them – provide citizens a gradebook to track how each of you respond to this briefing. And for clarity –they are The Briefing Project’s stakes for me; for you; and for the airport neighbor communities.

Notably, the sudden confluence of these Accords and Commissioner Steinbrueck’s solid proposal for using tax \$10 million in tax levy revenue for a Community Fund provides both a case study as well as proof that context is everything. For example, with the Fourth Accord, our communities would know, along with terrifically busting the myth that there are only federal contour dollars for mitigation by the Port, that the \$10 million reflects an ongoing policy priority of using levy funds for mitigation – and critically, not a one-and-done tax levy dip. With the First Accord, citizens could accept the \$10 million as evidence of a renewed promise that economic growth depends upon protecting human health and the environment, because the Port will have reversed its January mistake of actually deleting the phrase “quality of life” and this interdependence from the Port’s bylaws. And with the Third Accord, citizens would know that any portion of the \$10 million deployed to support the Commerce Department’s Airport Mitigation Study would be protected by a policy of non-interference with the study.

Without context, the new Community Fund is subject to uncertainty. What does a “not to exceed” cap actually mean when we don’t know the actual costs of mitigation? How are we to assess the \$10 million when compared against the \$683 million for other Port projects, including \$540 million for the Terminal 5 renovation and a cruise-ship facility, to be pulled from the same tax levy dollars over the same period, which the Seattle Times states will deplete the tax levy funding entirely?

Context is everything. Thank you for giving a citizen two-minutes to comment.