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PROCLAMATION OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION

WHEREAS, Black lives matter; and

WHEREAS, racial oppression is deeply rooted in our nation’s early beginnings — from the mass exploitation of Native American populations to the enslavement of Black Americans — and acknowledging this checkered past is essential to healing and creating a more equitable future; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation declared “that all persons held as slaves...are, and henceforward shall be free”; and

WHEREAS, news and enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation did not reach Texas until June 19, 1865, two and one half years later – when Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were now free; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth (June 19th) is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, Port employee Lilyian Caswell-Isley, former Director of Social Responsibility, led the first celebration of Juneteenth at the Port, and through the leadership of Blacks in Government, the Port continues to celebrate Juneteenth annually; and

WHEREAS, the Port of Seattle Commission has a social responsibility to combat systemic racism and racism in all its nefarious forms, and work to contribute to a more equitable and just world; and

WHEREAS, the Century Agenda Goal 5 calls for the Port to “Become a Model for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion;” and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the Port established an Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to address institutional racism and increase equity, diversity, and inclusion in Port policies, processes, and programs; and

41 **WHEREAS,** the official recognition of Juneteenth as a Port Holiday is a significant way that
42 we can celebrate freedom, help create a culture of belonging, and a more
43 equitable, anti-racist Port culture.
44

45 **NOW, THEREFORE,** the Port of Seattle Commission hereby honors and recognizes
46 Juneteenth, the 19th of June each year, as an official Port Holiday for all Port employees, and one
47 of the many ways we celebrate our rich African-American cultural heritage, acknowledge our
48 history of institutional racism and slavery, demonstrate that Black lives matter, and advance racial
49 equity.
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51 Proclaimed by the Port of Seattle Commission this 19th day of May, 2021.
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