



## 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 19<sup>th</sup>) 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

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

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

Proclaimed by the Port of Seattle Commission this 25 day of May, 2021.

Port of Seattle Commission

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