



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 10b

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting August 10, 2021

DATE: July 16, 2021

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Alex Adams, Interim Director, Maritime Environment & Sustainability
Jon Sloan, Sr. Manager Environmental Programs

SUBJECT: Interlocal Agreement with Washington Sea Grant for Hershman Fellowship

Amount of this request: N/A
Total estimated project cost: \$39,975

ACTION REQUESTED

Authorization for Executive Director to sign an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with University of Washington's Sea Grant program, substantially in the form attached with minor changes to be approved by legal counsel. The ILA will allow the Port to host one (1) 12-month Hershman Fellowship position.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington Sea Grant, based out of the University of Washington, was established to help people understand and address the challenges facing Washington's oceans and coasts. Sea Grant funds research, fosters education, and supports several graduate fellowship programs. The Hershman Fellowship program is for soon-to-graduate or recently finished graduate students who are engaged in ocean and coastal policy issues. The purpose is to develop marine and natural resource policies related to Port operations and/or management of Port properties and share their expertise with a host agency. The Port of Seattle (Port) applied to the program in March 2021 and was accepted to host one (1) Fellow starting on September 20, 2021. In exchange for the services of the Fellow, the Port will provide \$39,975 to the Sea Grant program. Funding is already authorized in the annual expense budget for the Maritime Environment and Sustainability Department (ME&S). The Fellow will be an employee of the University of Washington, which will pay their salaries and benefits, but the Fellow will be hosted by the Port and embedded within the ME&S department and located at Pier 69.

Meeting Date: August 10, 2021

JUSTIFICATION

The Port of Seattle’s ME&S department routinely works to address complex environmental problems in the maritime industry. This work creates opportunities to engage young people through internships and/or fellowships to participate, providing value-added services to the Port while also furthering career-development and educational objectives. The Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellowship program is a good fit for the Port in that it provides 12-months of employment for highly competent recent post-grads with interest in our work, at very low cost. In exchange, the Port will receive the benefit of their experience and assistance with developing policies and programs related to operation of its seaport, including energy, habitat restoration, climate resiliency, and community engagement.

Diversity in Contracting

The Port participated in interviews of seven fellowship candidates through a matching process managed by the University of Washington. The interviews included questions about the candidates’ views on sustainability, maritime environment as well as diversity, equity and inclusion. During the selection process, several candidates expressed a passion for environmental matters, science communication, and the maritime industry, as well as social justice.

DETAILS

The ME&S department first applied to be a host agency to the Hershman Fellowship program in February 2020. We were selected to host two fellowship positions in 2020-21. The fellows were an excellent fit at the Port and contributed value-added work throughout their fellowships.

For 2021-22, the Port is requesting a Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellow to assist with the following priority environmental work:

- Participate in design, construction and monitoring of mitigation bank projects in the Green-Duwamish River Watershed and associated nearshore areas, including coordination with project sponsor, project managers, designers, and other project team members;
- Work with Port staff, consultants and stakeholders to develop a business plan that will provide visibility to the Port’s mitigation bank by establishing goals and objectives for mitigation credit sales and marketing as well as identifying potential customers of mitigation bank credits;
- Support innovation in the Port’s habitat mitigation banking program by participating in the floating wetland islands project with Port staff, UW faculty, UW students, EarthCorps, and project stakeholders.

Meeting Date: August 10, 2021

The above work is critical to achieving the Port's environmental goals related to habitat restoration. Additional staffing support provided by a Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellow will help the Port make progress on these goals and will also help fill staffing shortfalls that have resulted from the COVID-19 crisis. At the same time, the work will provide an outstanding experience for the Fellow that will help prepare the Fellow for careers in the maritime and/or environmental industry.

Schedule

Fellowship positions are scheduled to begin on September 20, 2021 and will run for 12-months. The interlocal agreement needs to be finalized with the University of Washington prior to September 20, 2021.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1. Engage graduate or undergraduate interns to participate in the work.

Cost Implications: Cost would be slightly higher, approximately \$42,000 per position for 12-months of full-time work.

Pros:

- (1) Builds on a robust internship program
- (2) Introduces maritime environmental issues to students earlier in their education.

Cons:

- (1) Interns are typically less experienced and have not completed their degrees.
- (2) Interns are generally limited to 3-month period.
- (3) Cost is higher.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 2. Engage full time staff to undertake the work.

Cost Implications: Cost would be substantially higher at \$175,000 per position.

Pros:

- (1) Hiring full-time employees is an investment which develops long-term internal competency and provides the Port with more consistency over time.

Cons:

- (1) Hiring during and following COVID-19 requires special exceptions for hiring FTEs.
- (2) Cost of a full-time employee is substantially higher.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Meeting Date: August 10, 2021

Alternative 3 – Engage a Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellow to participate in the work.

Cost Implications: Positions require contribution of \$39,975 per position to University of Washington.

Pros:

- (1) Port benefits from experience and energy of highly capable post-grads who are eager to engage in maritime environmental issues at a much lower cost than hiring a full-time employee.
- (2) Continues partnership with University of Washington Sea Grant program.
- (3) Enables the Port to continue with projects that are on pause due to limitations on hiring during the COVID-19 response.

Cons:

- (1) Because the fellowship is only a short-term (1 year) employment opportunity, the Port can only access the experience of the individual fellows during the one-year period.

This is the recommended alternative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no funding requested as part of this authorization.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

- (1) Draft Interlocal Agreement
- (2) Presentation Slides