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February 2024

## Black History Is American History



Dear Friends,

Throughout every stage of our country’s short life, Black Americans have led the struggle for equity and justice. From the abolition of slavery to voting rights to civil rights to LGBTQ rights, Black communities have fought for generations to strengthen our nation and perfect our democracy. Black History Month is undoubtedly a recognition of the immeasurable sacrifice and contributions of

Black Americans, while recognizing that we all benefit when we advance equity.

During its meeting on February 27, the Port Commission passed a proclamation ([watch the reading](#)) recognizing February as Black History Month and honoring the contributions of two local Black leaders. The Commission and the Port’s chapter of Blacks in Government (BIG) recognized Eddie Rye Jr. with a Lifetime Achievement Award and Chef Kristi Brown with a Business Excellence Award. Following the meeting, the Commission and BIG hosted a short reception to present the awards and celebrate this year’s Black History Month.

Every day, I encourage and challenge us all to make time and space for Black voices and stories, both past and present. I challenge us to confront our history, even when it’s hurtful and shameful. I encourage us to reframe how Black Americans are viewed and seen in our country. And I challenge us, in big ways and small, to center Black Americans in the narrative of our nation. Let’s not think of February as the only time to uplift Black leaders and accomplishments, but instead think of the stories of Black Americans and our country as inseparable.

In Unity,



**Bookda Gheisar**  
Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## Centering Equity and Taking Action

### OEDI's 2023 Annual Report



Our work embodies love and hope — grounded in reality and paired with action. We know that a brighter future for all is possible. As one of the largest economic drivers in our region, the Port is positioned to lead efforts that create greater access, inclusion, and fairness for the communities we serve. We have much work ahead, and we have a lot to celebrate from 2023. Check out [OEDI's 2023 Annual Report](#) and the ways we are advancing equity inside and outside the Port.

### Celebrating Black History Month at SEA with Two Local Artists

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) recently acquired multiple artworks by two esteemed local African American artists, Barbara Earl Thomas and Marita Dingus. The pieces — the first three-dimensional objects created by African American artists in SEA's collection — are currently on display on the Ticketing Level by Checkpoint 1. [Learn more →](#)



## \$5 Million Approved to Pilot Noise Insulation Repair and Replacement for Near-Airport Communities



On February 27, the Port of Seattle Commission directed staff to assess the effectiveness of previously installed, federally funded noise insulation packages in communities around SEA Airport. The also Commission authorized \$5 million in Port levy dollars to pilot a program for eligible repairs and replacements and will seek state and federal matching dollars for this purpose.

The effort continues the Port's pioneering of residential noise insulation programs from the 1980s and recent expedited efforts to secure federal funds to address the issue of re-insulation. [Learn more](#) →

## Measuring Port Investments in Equity

The Port of Seattle's budget is both a fiscal and moral document. It should reflect our priorities and values — both to the communities we serve and to ourselves. At the same time, equity is both a process and outcome. Too often, the impact of equity work is hard to quantify. The Port has created a new way to track and quantify equity investments. We call it "Equity Spending." This tool shows both employees and communities what we're doing to create fairness, inclusion, and belonging. In a tangible way, this tool is helping the Port become more transparent and accountable. [Learn more about Equity Spending](#) and check out this [short video](#).



## Port Prioritizes Community, Restoration, and Opportunity Along the Duwamish River



The Duwamish River provides our region with important community assets, recreational fishing and tribal cultural heritage resources, and a critical estuarine environment for fish and wildlife. The river has played a crucial role in developing our region's economy for more than one hundred years.

Today local maritime and industrial businesses employ over 100,000 people and support more than 25% of the manufacturing in King County. 2024 will see an increase in the Port's commitment to people along and near the Duwamish River. [Learn more →](#)

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**Port of Seattle  
Commission** Ryan Calkins  
Sam Cho  
Fred Felleman  
Toshiko Hasegawa  
Hamdi Mohamed

**Port of Seattle  
Executive Director** Stephen P. Metruck



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