

COMMISSION AGENDA

Item No: 7A

Meeting: 5/19/22

DATE: May 3, 2022

TO: Port Commission

FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director
Sponsor: Commissioner Kristin Ang
Project Manager: Sean Eagan

SUBJECT: Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

A. ACTION REQUESTED

Request approval of Proclamation 2022-04-PT recognizing May as “Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.”

B. BACKGROUND

The Port of Tacoma has adopted a Diversity and Inclusion Policy. This states that the Port respects and values the rich diversity of its employees, customers, contractors and stakeholders and that it is committed to a work environment that is inclusive and values diverse thought and expression in pursuit of the organization’s mission and is committed to provide a workplace environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

On September 17, 2020, the Port of Tacoma Commission adopted Resolution 2020-06-PT identifying diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values that the Port of Tacoma shall incorporate into its Strategic Plan and into its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives. The resolution adopted the following guiding principles as the basis for the Port of Tacoma’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives: undoing and understanding the history of racism, embracing differences, and developing leadership.

On April 16, 2021, the Port of Tacoma Commission approved a new strategic plan, which contained the following two strategies:

1. Integrate the values of diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as health and safety, into the Port's culture and decision-making framework (OS-5).
2. Strengthen, build and maintain strategic relationships with federal, state and local governments and with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage in the United States was celebrated beginning in 1978 and was made into a month-long event in 1992. The month of May was chosen as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese citizen, Nakahama Manjiro, to the United States on May 7, 1843, but also the anniversary of the May 10, 1869 completion of the first Transcontinental Railroad, built with the back-breaking labor of nearly 20,000 Chinese immigrants.

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month provides an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders that enrich our history, society and culture. It also provides a chance to acknowledge a darker aspect of the AAPI experience in America - structural discrimination, prejudice and injustice that most recently manifested itself in racist attacks on Asian Americans related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Asian American and Pacific Islanders have distinguished themselves as leading researchers in science, medicine, and technology; innovative farmers and ranchers; distinguished lawyers, judges and government leaders; in the arts, literature, and sports; as war heroes who defended our country from fascism; and peacetime healthcare heroes currently on the front lines of the pandemic.

Eight percent of the population residing in the Port of Tacoma port district are of Asian American or Pacific Island descent. Today more than 20 million Asian American and Pacific Islanders live in the United States and through their actions, make America a more vibrant, prosperous, and secure nation.

C. SCOPE

The proclamation recognizes May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and calls upon the people of Pierce County to recognize the achievements and many contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the community, the nation and the world.

D. TIMEFRAME / PROJECT SCHEDULE

May is recognized as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.

E. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

No financial impacts.

F. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Alternative 1—Do nothing: Choosing not to recognize Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month could send a signal that the Port does not recognize diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values and could be perceived as inconsistent with Strategic Plan Strategies OS-5 and CC-2.

G. ATTACHMENTS

Proposed proclamation