

# COMMISSION AGENDA

Item No: 4B

Meeting: 2/21/19

**DATE:** February 4, 2019

**TO:** Port Commission

**FROM:** John Wolfe, Chief Executive Officer  
Sponsor: Leslie Barstow  
Presenter: Sue Mauermann, President, Board of Directors, The Point Defiance Zoological Society

**SUBJECT:** Briefing on the Point Defiance Zoological Society's Tidal Surge exhibit

## A. ACTION REQUESTED

This presentation is intended to provide the Commission with an update on the \$50,000 investment made from the 2018 Local Economic Development Investment Fund's investment in the Point Defiance Zoological Society's Tidal Surge exhibit.

## B. BACKGROUND

State law grants public port districts a variety of powers to bring economic development to their community. At the Port of Tacoma, economic development occurs in both direct ways—such as through the development of publicly-owned marine terminals, railroads and industrial parks (RCW 53.04.010)—as well as indirect ways through economic development investments (RCW 53.08.245).

The Port's Local Economic Development Policy authorizes the Port to make investments in projects by federally-registered non-profit organizations that seek to promote Washington-state based international trade, tourism or business retention and recruitment efforts in Pierce County. These investments include reporting requirements on how the contracted organization is performing relative to the measurements identified at the time the award is made.

Originally built in 1963, the Point Defiance Zoo's aquarium was designed to highlight the beauty and the inhabitants of the region's waters. 55 years later, the realization that the tank had degraded prompted the effort to design a new, state-of-the-art Pacific Seas Aquarium. Designed to help visitors explore how vital Pacific Northwest waters and oceans are to the entire region's way of life, culture, commerce, and tourism, the new aquarium also uses hands-on activities to educate ways in which an individual can play a role in protecting these waters.

Located right at the entrance to the new Pacific Seas Aquarium is the Tidal Surge exhibit, a 4,500-foot channel, moving wave-action habitat that transports visitors to the coastal waters. Visitors have a close-up view of the amazing ways that anemones, sea stars, urchins and other animals have adapted to pounding waves and changing tides among the rocks and reefs—marine life that is in critical need of stewardship and protection. The exhibit was funded in part by the Port of Tacoma's Local Economic Development Investment Fund, so it is now called the Port of Tacoma Tidal Surge Exhibit.

The Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium receives 700,000 visitors a year, 50 percent of which come from outside of Pierce County.