



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Sound Cities Association Issues Proclamation of Commitment to an Inclusive Community that Rejects Stigma and Bias Related to COVID-19

Today the Sound Cities Association (SCA) Board unanimously approved a Proclamation of commitment to an inclusive community that rejects stigma and bias related to COVID-19.

“Our communities should be safe and welcoming for all residents and visitors. This proclamation is one more reminder that hate, discrimination and fear have no place here or anywhere else. This is a time for us to come together, take care of our neighbors and work together to beat this pandemic. Every person has a place in our community. We see you and you matter,” said Kent Mayor Dana Ralph, who serves as President of the SCA Board.

“I am proud to be part of a regional organization that is so committed to equity, and inclusion. This proclamation lets residents of all cities know that their leaders won't tolerate bigotry and discrimination,” said Councilmember Ed Prince of Renton, who serves as Vice President of SCA.

Mayor Nancy Backus of Auburn agreed, stating “I am proud to be part of an organization like SCA that believes so strongly in racial equity and inclusivity. There is never a place in any of our communities for hatred, harassment or racial based bias.”

Said Issaquah Mayor Mary Lou Pauly, “Let's change our local and national discourse to one of inclusion and unity instead of division and blame. Our diversity makes us stronger and allows us to overcome the greatest of challenges together, even something as daunting as the COVID-19 pandemic. Be kind, be compassionate and be helpful. These are the greatest qualities we share as Americans.”

The Proclamation was referred to the SCA Board by the SCA Public Issues Committee (PIC). Deputy Mayor Christie Malchow, who serves as Chair of the PIC stated, “It was important for the PIC and the SCA Board to pass this proclamation so that every constituent we represent across all 38 cities knows that our cities are not tolerant of bias, harassment or hate crimes stemming from COVID-19 and misinformation. SCA represents a diverse region, where our commitment to inclusivity is one of our greatest strengths during this pandemic.”

The motion to approve the Proclamation was made by Councilmember James McNeal of Bothell, who stated “This proclamation is especially timely in May, which marks Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. It is critical that we as local elected officials condemn the xenophobia, bias, and violence that have recently targeted people of Asian descent, as well as racism in all its forms. Hate has no place in our region.”

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, immigrant and refugee community leaders and civil rights organizations have reported a regional and national increase in bias, harassment, and hate crimes, particularly against Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, and other marginalized communities. The SCA Board recognizes that misinformation about coronavirus propagates fear hurts people and impairs the ability of our first responders and other city services to provide necessary response to COVID-19. The Proclamation recognizes that elected officials, and all members of our community, can and should

promote inclusiveness, celebrate diversity, support all fellow community members, prevent the spread of misinformation, and reject hate and bias in all forms. The Proclamation provides that SCA and its member cities reject racially-based bias, harassment, and hate crimes due to COVID-19, will not tolerate discrimination of any kind, and denounce all COVID-19-related misnaming, blaming and harassment based on race, ethnicity, place of origin, physical ability, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, age or religion.

Community members who observe or are experiencing incidents of discrimination, harassment, or hate crimes are encouraged to call 911 in emergency circumstances, and/or to report the incident to the Washington State Human Rights Commission (Toll-free 1-800-233-3247) or the King County Office of Civil Rights at (206) 684-4500. SCA urges all our members and residents of our member cities to treat each other with respect and work together to overcome all expressions of hate and bigotry.

The Sound Cities Association (SCA) represents 38 cities and over a million people in King County. SCA's mission is provide leadership through advocacy, education, mutual support and networking to cities in King County as they act locally and partner regionally to create livable vital communities. SCA is capitalizing on the diversity of its cities to lead policy change to make the Puget Sound region the best in the world.

The 2020 SCA Board Members are:

- President Dana Ralph, Kent Mayor
- Vice President Ed Prince, Renton City Councilmember
- Treasurer Jeff Wagner, Covington Mayor
- Secretary Amy Ockerlander, Duvall Mayor
- Past President Leanne Guier, Pacific Mayor
- Public Issues Committee (PIC) Chair Christie Malchow, Sammamish Deputy Mayor
- Nancy Backus, Auburn Mayor
- Angela Birney, Redmond Mayor
- James McNeal, Bothell City Councilmember
- Jan Molinaro, Enumclaw Mayor
- Laura Philpot, Maple Valley City Manager
- Mary Lou Pauly, Issaquah Mayor
- Wendy Weiker, Mercer Island Deputy Mayor

For Further Information:

Deanna Dawson
Executive Director, SCA
(206) 495-3265 (cell)

Deanna@SoundCities.org

www.SoundCities.org