

Candidate: Sam Cho
Office: Port of Seattle Commissioner
Position: Position 2
Contact Number: (425) 770-7776
Email: sam@electsamcho.com

The Urbanist Port of Seattle Commissioner Questionnaire

- **What are your goals for the Port of Seattle board for the next term?**

My reason for running for the Port is to make the Port of Seattle work for the *people* of Seattle. One of my top goals is to reform the port such that it can better reflect the constituents it serves. As of now, the Port consists of 5 commissioners who are white and all live in Seattle. This is despite the fact that the Port is a county-wide position. If elected, I would be the only person of color and only commissioner from outside of Seattle. In my first term, I will push for the districting of the port race so that every corner of the county is represented. This is especially important for those who live in South King County in/around the airport who are disproportionately affected by airport operations but have no voice or representation on the commission.

At the same time, we have a President in the White House who is engaged in trade wars with some of our closest trading partners which threatens the health of our economy. As a small business owner in exports and trade, I intend to leverage my experience in international business to help promote Washington as a key trading partner where 40% of jobs in the state are reliant on trade. At a time of economic uncertainty, I believe we need a port commissioner who can help protect our corner of the country from the destructive policies coming out of Washington DC.

Additionally as an exporter, I have a unique perspective as someone who has actually exported out of the Port of Seattle and understands port operations. Common sense infrastructure investments such as “on rock rail” will allow the Port of Seattle to run far more efficiently and dramatically reduce drayage costs for exporters thus making the Port of Seattle more competitive compared to the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert, Canada.

I also want to focus on tackling human and labor trafficking. According to reported incidents of Human and Labor trafficking, Seattle is the 12th most in the country. Although the Port of Seattle has mandated training for all Port employees on awareness, this same training should be mandated to our tenant airline and cruise companies and their employees in order to ensure that the entire footprint of the Port of Seattle is not contributing to human and labor trafficking.

Lastly, I plan on tackling climate change even more aggressively than in the past. For instance, the Port of Seattle recently installed “cold ironing” for cruise ships to plug into the electrical grids so they can power down their engines when docked at our piers. However, the use of cold ironing is not mandated. I believe it should be mandatory. I also believe that we need to start funding research and development for the next generation of aviation and maritime technology

through the establishment of an Innovation Center. This means exploring the use of biofuel, hydrogen, and other electrification possibilities including the electrification of planes. We have a world class institution in the University of Washington and a company that is at the forefront of aviation in Boeing. We should leverage our resources to research the next generation of technology.

- **What do you envision as the future of Terminal 5 in Seattle?**

Terminal 5 will be renovated and re-opened for large container ships. As of now, the terminal can only support 6,000 TEU (20 foot equivalent) ocean liners. However, after the expansion and renovation, it will be able to accommodate 18,000 TEU container ships. This will not only allow us expand the amount of business at the port, but it will actually help us to *reduce* the number of ships coming in and out of the port because we will be able to handle larger ships with more containers on them as opposed to many more smaller ships with less containers. If we were to use a metaphor, this is a lot like using buses and mass transit on roads as opposed to 4 person vehicles. Allowing larger vessels means less traffic in and out of the port and less disruption for residents as well as the fish and wildlife in the Puget Sound—especially our endangered Orca population.

I would also like to see “on dock rail” at Terminal 5. This is the idea of having a rail line that goes directly down to the dock so that the containers can be loaded on and off the ships without an extra layer of drayage. This will not only reduce costs, but it will also be helpful in reducing the carbon footprint since we will no longer need truckers to bring the containers from the rail line to the dock.

- **Sound Transit 3 light rail routes will impact Port of Seattle holdings and interests. What role should the Port play in the process and should it be a funding partner?**

Sound Transit 3 will mostly be paid for by increasing sales tax, motor vehicle excise tax, and property taxes. Although the Port of Seattle has its own levy authority and can raise taxes on King County residents, the levy is through property taxes. Therefore, raising the port levy on King County residents for ST 3 would only be redundant to the already increasing property taxes in the county. However, I do believe that Sound Transit plays a crucial role in alleviating the traffic congestion going into the airport and environmental pollution of cars driving into the airport. Therefore, the Port of Seattle should see how it can partner with Sound Transit to that end.

- **Do you support tolling Airport Drive to reduce private vehicle use at the airport?**

I do not support tolling. I believe tolling has been abused to serve as a source of revenue rather than used to disincentivize drivers. We should instead be focusing on mass transit and light rail.

- **What commitments as a commissioner will you make to fight climate change?**

I will commit to pushing for more drastic changes at the port that reduce our carbon footprint. That means pushing for a more aggressive timeline for electrification and transitioning to

sustainable sources of energy. I will also push make common sense infrastructure investments like in cold ironing at the docks. I also would like to fund an innovation center that does research and development in the next generation of clean tech in aviation and maritime. We should also be doing more extensive research in carbon capture and carbon sequestration.

- **The Port owns a great deal of land. Would you support using any of it to deal with the region's affordable housing crisis, as other public entities have done?**

I believe that the Port of Seattle should have a stake in fighting the region's affordable housing and homelessness crisis. I would be very cautious of re-zoning industrial land for residential or commercial use. Once that land is converted to residential, it cannot be converted back. We must ensure that we do not make any drastic moves that will impede the ability for port workers to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. In fact, this is the mistake that the port of San Francisco made by converting to much of their dockside land into commercial and residential. They now do all their maritime cargo out of the Port of Oakland. However, I do believe that using the Interbay Armory for affordable housing and mixed use is a great idea that I would support. I believe that workforce housing should be used to also get homeless people off the streets and into apprenticeship or trade schools so they can be hired into lifelong careers.