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Contact: Perry Cooper, SEA Airport
206.787.4923 / cooper.p@portseattle.org

Katie Amodei, BEST
425.787.5128 / katie@bestalliance.org

Port of Seattle Introduces Employee Training to Combat Human Trafficking

The first proprietary anti-human trafficking training developed by a port authority launches during National Human Trafficking Awareness Month

(SEATTLE) – The Port of Seattle today announced the implementation of a new human trafficking awareness training for its employees, developed in partnership with Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST). This training – the first proprietary anti-human trafficking training developed by a port authority – will ensure that Port staff, and others who work at Port facilities, have the knowledge and resources to recognize and respond to instances of human trafficking.

“The Port has made a commitment to safety and security, that includes learning to help spot and stop human trafficking,” said Port of Seattle Commission President Peter Steinbrueck. “This training will provide our staff and partners with the know-how to interrupt the traffickers that make this issue such a pervasive local concern and reach victims of human trafficking to ensure the airport and our maritime facilities are safe and welcoming for our community.”

“Human traffickers often move victims through airports and seaports,” explains Mar Brettmann, CEO of BEST. “The Port of Seattle partnered with BEST to create two online human trafficking prevention courses—one for the maritime industry and another for the aviation industry. This training will help stop labor and sex trafficking in Washington state as aviation and maritime workers learn how to recognize and quickly respond to a human trafficking situation. All employees can assist people who are coerced to work against their will to once again find freedom and hope.”

The newly launched Port curricula – “Flights to Freedom: Human Trafficking Training Prevention” for aviation employees and “Ports to Freedom: Human Trafficking Training Prevention” for maritime employees – encompasses an e-Learning module and in-person trainings. The trainings ensure Port employees understand what human trafficking is, as well as how to identify, report and stop human trafficking that may take place in or around Port facilities. During January 2020 National Human Trafficking Awareness Month, Port employees participated in one of three in person trainings. Additionally, the Port Police Department has previously developed its own law enforcement-specific human trafficking intervention training.

During the development of the human trafficking awareness training, other Port of Seattle aviation and maritime partners and tenants participated in focus groups, led by BEST. These partners, including federal agencies, airlines, airport vendors and contractors, expressed interest in implementing this training for their employees. The Port is working with BEST to ultimately make the training available to all workers at Port facilities.

Port of Seattle Human Trafficking Strategy

On January 9, 2018, the Port of Seattle Commission passed a motion directing staff to finalize and implement a Port-wide strategy to combat human trafficking. The Port's human trafficking strategy has four focus areas, including:

- **Training** – Ensuring that all employees have access to the proper training and education to understand both what human trafficking is and its impacts on our communities.
- **Communications** – Using port facilities and communications channels to raise public awareness of human trafficking and provide information to stop trafficking at our facilities.
- **Policies and Protocols** – Ensuring that Port policies prohibit engagement in human trafficking, and provide clear procedures for employees to follow to report suspicion of human trafficking and violations of these policies.
- **Partnerships** – Leveraging relationships to reduce duplication and to maximize the impact of our efforts, including collaborating with nonprofits; local, state and federal agencies; and key customers and vendors.

As the Port acknowledges National Human Trafficking Awareness Month in January, we have implemented all aspects of the Port's anti-human trafficking strategy – from the successful creation of an internal policy to ensure all Port employees understand our commitment to this vital equity and social justice issue to the successful rollout of a regional human trafficking awareness campaign.

Traffickers use violence, threats, deception, debt bondage, and other manipulative tactics to force people to engage in commercial sex or to provide labor or services against their will. It is estimated that human trafficking generates billions of dollars of profit per year – second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable form of transnational crime.

Washington state had the 13th highest call volume to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2018. In King County, an estimated 500-700 children are prostituted annually, some are as young as nine-years-old; there are over 100 websites for soliciting sex in the Seattle area, many of which are used for human trafficking purposes.

As both the operator of an airport and an owner of a wide array of maritime facilities, the Port of Seattle can reduce the probability that our properties will be used as a transit point for traffickers and their victims. As a major employer, we educate our staff on the damaging effect that exploitation and trafficking have on individual lives and families,

and how it undermines our commitment to equity and social justice. As a public sector leader, we collaborate with other jurisdictions, customers, vendors and partners to raise awareness of this important issue.

In 2019 the Port of Seattle, King County, City of Seattle, Sound Transit, and several other public and private sector partners launched a unified public awareness campaign to stop human trafficking and encouraging survivors to call the National Human Trafficking Hotline for assistance (1-888-373-7888).

About the Port of Seattle

Founded in 1911 by a vote of the people as a special purpose government, the Port of Seattle's mission is to promote economic opportunities and quality of life in the region by advancing trade, travel, commerce, and job creation in an equitable, accountable, and environmentally responsible manner. The Port owns and operates Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Fishermen's Terminal—home of the North Pacific fishing fleet—and public marinas. The Port also owns two cruise ship terminals, a grain terminal, real estate assets, and marine cargo terminals through its partnership in the Northwest Seaport Alliance. Port operations help support nearly 200,000 jobs and \$7 billion in wages throughout the region. Over the next 17 years, the port's "Century Agenda" seeks to create an additional 100,000 jobs through economic growth while becoming the nation's leading green and energy-efficient port. Learn more at www.portseattle.org.

About Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking

Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST) is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization with the mission to align and equip leaders to use the power of business to prevent human trafficking. BEST is the first organization in the country dedicated entirely to working with businesses to disrupt human trafficking. BEST has provided consultation and training to hundreds of businesses on how to prevent human trafficking. For more information, visit www.bestalliance.org.

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