



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

October 1, 2018

*Via Email Only*

Debra Smith, General Manager/CEO  
Seattle City Light  
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 3200  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Re: City Council Expectations for Debra Smith, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of Seattle City Light**

Dear Ms. Smith:

Congratulations on your appointment as General Manager/CEO of Seattle City Light (SCL). The letter has been placed in Appointment No. 1129. To be successful, the head of City Light needs to work constructively with both the Executive branch and the City Council., and we look forward to working with you.

To that end, as part of the Council's confirmation review process, we want to communicate to you our expectations for your job performance if you are confirmed. The Council expectations (listed below) are intended to enhance your accountability to the Council. Council expectations are intended to add to the Mayor's expectations and your responsibilities established in Seattle Municipal Code.

## **I. City Council General Expectations for the SCL GM/CEO**

- A. Relationship with Council. The SCL GM/CEO is expected to maintain a constructive working relationship with the Council, as demonstrated by:
1. Prompt and complete responses to Council information inquiries.
  2. Pro-active updates on policy development, operational concerns and financial matters of significance, so that the Council is informed of significant changes or controversies before the information reaches the media and/or before the Executive submits a request for Council action.
  3. Dependable implementation of formal policy direction provided by the Council.
  4. Assistance in the research and development of Council policy initiatives.
- B. Management Skills. The SCL GM/CEO is expected to demonstrate strong management skills, with particular focus on the following Council priorities:
1. Public communication
    - a. Conduct inclusive outreach to relevant stakeholders.
    - b. Implement a strong ethic of customer service.

- c. Make information available so that the public can track the department's performance in delivering services and fiscal management.
2. Organizational management
  - a. Coordinate productively with other City departments.
  - b. Maintain strong working relationships with other governmental entities.
  - c. Operate within budget constraints and pro-actively manage expenditures.
  - d. Provide a fair and equitable approach to the award of City contracts.
3. Personnel management
  - a. Develop and maintain strong morale among employees.
  - b. Provide an inclusive work environment that offers equitable opportunities for all.
  - c. Address issues of succession planning and the professional development of existing staff.
4. Service delivery, including both routine operations and emergent situations
  - a. Ensure that on-going, day-to-day services are provided effectively and efficiently, and that the department tracks its performance in delivering such services.
  - b. Make certain the Utility is able to deal with localized emergencies or service disruptions and has thoroughly planned how to manage its operations in case of a City-wide emergency.

## II. Specific Expectations for the SCL GM/CEO

Seattle City Light plays a crucial role in our city and region, being the sole provider of electricity to the City of Seattle and the franchise cities and unincorporated areas. For households without access to natural gas or other heating options, City Light's role is ever more important.

Seattle City Light is also the largest department by budget, with the second largest workforce in Seattle. The importance of improving workplace morale will be vital to success in this role.

Finally, Seattle City Light carries the torch for Seattle's values around conservation and environmental protection, at times seemingly working against its own self-interest in the short-term in order to advocate for policies that will benefit generations to come.

We respectfully request the GM/CEO implement (and provide regular progress reports on) the following Council expectations:

- A. Race and Social Justice. Advance the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative, provide guidance to the Utility in implementing programs, services and issuing contracts that enhance race and social justice for the City's residents and employ criteria sensitive to race and social justice concerns in developing and administering the Utility's budget.



- B. Workplace Culture. In collaboration with employees of Seattle City Light and joint ventures with Seattle Public Utilities, lead affirmative and positive changes in workplace culture at Seattle City Light, inclusive of updating employee manuals to be timely and relevant, operate a leadership team that builds trust with workers, and take appropriate corrective action promptly, while keeping Council informed of issues known to management before they arise in the press.
- C. Customer Service. Continue work to improve customer experience with Seattle City Light, including reformation of City Light bills to customers that are relevant and understandable to lay persons, improving wait times for service, improving lag time for shutoff from tenants moving from a unit, and improving wait times for hookups for new customers.
- D. Engagement with the Review Panel. Attend City Light Review Panel meetings, and provide candid and open assessment of current conditions at City Light, and engage with the Review Panel to receive feedback and ideas on implementation of the Strategic Plan and Rate Design updates.
- E. Consultation with Tribes and Engagement with Salmon Restoration Advocates. Continue regular consultation with Tribes and engagement and collaboration with salmon restoration advocates, including regular meetings at least once every three months, to develop and implement science-based policies that reflect the values of our city and region, that seek to protect and restore resilient, functional salmon habitat, and recover salmon – a critical source of food for our resident Orca populations – to self-sustaining, harvestable populations, including exploration of appropriate dam removal and mitigation strategies, and appropriate advocacy on behalf of City Light to meet the ecological needs of our region as balanced with the needs of ratepayers.
- F. Community Engagement. Provide robust and routine engagement where appropriate with community organizations to ensure transparency and accessibility of government services, to provide information and education about City Light programs, and to hear and engage with the community as a key partner in policy development for Seattle City Light.
- G. Equity in City Contracting and Purchasing. Continue efforts to increase the utilization of Minority-owned Businesses (MBEs), Women-owned Businesses (WBEs) and other historically disadvantaged businesses in purchasing, consultant contracting and public works contracting, with a short-term goal of utilizing MBEs and WBEs in a proportion commensurate to their respective availability in those markets in which the City conducts procurement. In markets where there exists an underrepresentation of MBEs and WBEs relative to their proportion of Seattle residents, work to eliminate structural barriers to their participation in the City contracting process and to increase the availability of MBE and WBE vendors.

- H. Capital Development, Facilities Construction and Facilities Management. Be an effective steward of general government capital resources; provide efficiency in capital planning and capital project administration; and ensure appropriate investments in asset management to preserve the long-term viability of the Utility's capital infrastructure.
- I. Public Disclosure Request Management. Meet the goals and expectations set out in Ordinance 122969 implementing the Public Records Act, facilitating open and transparent government.
- J. Continuity of Operations and Emergency Operations. Develop a prudent personnel succession and emergency operations and continuity plan for Seattle City Light, to ensure the Utility's ability to provide services despite personnel changes or citywide emergencies.
- K. Generating Technologies. Report on City Light's analysis and implementation of new generation technologies including wind, solar, geothermal, tidal among others. When possible partnering with other utility providers in the tri-county region.
- L. Family-Wage Jobs. Report on how implementation of new and emerging technologies creates family-wage jobs and investments across the region.
- M. Future of Seattle. Partner with the City Council, Mayor, and City Departments when analyzing under-utilized or unused property for creating affordable housing, civic projects, and public assets for Seattleite's use.

The City Council looks forward to working cooperatively with you to ensure your tenure is successful at improving workplace culture and customer service at the Utility, while continuing the Utility's impressive history of being the nation's greenest utility. We look forward to a collaborative relationship over the coming years.

Sincerely,



Bruce A. Harrell, President  
Seattle City Council



Teresa Mosqueda, Chair  
Housing, Health, Energy & Workers' Rights  
Committee

cc: Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor, City of Seattle  
Seattle City Council Members