



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

## Legislative Summary

Res 31673

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<b>Record No.:</b> Res 31673	<b>Type:</b> Resolution (Res)	<b>Status:</b> Adopted
<b>Version:</b> 2	<b>Ord. no:</b>	<b>In Control:</b> City Clerk
		<b>File Created:</b> 05/26/2016
		<b>Final Action:</b> 06/27/2016

**Title:** A RESOLUTION affirming the Seattle City Council's commitment to high quality locally produced broadcast news to effectively inform the public in the case of emergencies.

<b>Notes:</b>	<u>Date</u>
	<b>Filed with City Clerk:</b>
	<b>Mayor's Signature:</b>
<b>Sponsors:</b> Sawant, Herbold	<b>Vetoed by Mayor:</b>
	<b>Veto Overridden:</b>
	<b>Veto Sustained:</b>

**Attachments:**  
**Drafter:** jodee.schwinn@seattle.gov

**Filing Requirements/Dept Action:**

**History of Legislative File** **Legal Notice Published:**  Yes  No

Version:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	City Clerk	05/31/2016	sent for review	Council President's Office			
	<b>Action Text:</b> The Resolution (Res) was sent for review. to the Council President's Office						
	<b>Notes:</b>						
1	Council President's Office	06/03/2016	sent for review	Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development, and Arts Committee			
	<b>Action Text:</b> The Resolution (Res) was sent for review. to the Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development, and Arts Committee						
	<b>Notes:</b>						
1	Full Council	06/06/2016	referred	Gender Equity, Safe Communities, and New Americans Committee			
	<b>Action Text:</b> The Resolution (Res) was referred. to the Gender Equity, Safe Communities, and New Americans Committee						

Notes:

- 1 Gender Equity, Safe Communities, and New Americans Committee      06/22/2016   adopt as amended      Pass

**Action Text:** The Committee recommends that Full Council adopt as amended the Resolution (Res).  
In Favor: 3   Chair González , Vice Chair Burgess, Sawant  
Opposed: 0  
Abstain: 1   Member Bagshaw

- 2 Full Council      06/27/2016   adopted      Pass

**Action Text:** The Motion carried, the Resolution (Res) was adopted by the following vote, and the President signed the Resolution:

**Notes:**      **ACTION 1:**

Motion was made by Councilmember Bagshaw, and duly seconded, to amend Resolution 31673 by substituting version 3 for version 2.

**ACTION 2:**

Motion was made by Councilmember Bagshaw to withdraw her motion.

**ACTION 3:**

Motion was made and duly seconded to adopt Resolution 31673.

In Favor: 7   Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Burgess, Councilmember González , Council President Harrell, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember Sawant  
Opposed: 0

- 2 City Clerk      06/27/2016   attested by City Clerk

**Action Text:** The Resolution (Res) was attested by City Clerk.

**Notes:**

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CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION 31673

1  
2  
3 A RESOLUTION affirming the Seattle City Council's commitment to high quality locally  
4 produced broadcast news to effectively inform the public in the case of emergencies.

5 WHEREAS, in 1949 KING 5 was established as the only broadcast television station in the  
6 Pacific Northwest, and under the leadership of Dorothy Bullitt, the first woman to buy  
7 and manage a television station in the United States, became one of the first local TV  
8 news operation in the country, with a national reputation for public service and  
9 innovation; and  
10

11 WHEREAS, broadcast television stations use public spectrum airwaves owned by the people of  
12 the United States, under license from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC),  
13 and in that license are required to "render such broadcasting service as will serve the  
14 public interest" as trustees for the public; and  
15

16 WHEREAS, residents and local governments rely on professional local broadcast television  
17 personnel to collect and disseminate vital information; including to provide real-time  
18 information during public emergencies (e.g., earthquakes, wildfires, and increasingly  
19 frequent extreme weather events) when other wireline and wireless communications  
20 and/or electric power distribution facilities may be disrupted; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, the special responsibility of local broadcasters in public emergencies was  
23 recognized in 2015 by the Oregon Legislature through the enactment of Oregon House  
24 Bill 2210 (ORS 401.239); designating local broadcasters as "First Informers" to  
25 complement "First Responders" (fire, police, etc.) and allocating specific responsibilities  
26 and privileges to professional local broadcast staff in public emergencies; and  
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28

1 WHEREAS, in 2013 Tegna Inc. (formerly Gannett Co. Inc.) acquired ownership of the Belo  
2 Corporation, which owns KING 5; and

3 WHEREAS, IATSE 600 and IBEW 46 have reported that KING 5 has introduced cutbacks in  
4 their news operations, introducing a greater focus on repurposing the commodified news  
5 product broadcast by other stations owned by their parent company; and

6 WHEREAS, the contract proposal offered on January 7, 2016, by KING 5 to their unionized  
7 workers demanded "flexible jurisdiction" language that would allow the company to  
8 replace professional union workers with amateur, temporary, outsourced, or otherwise  
9 nonunion personnel; and

10  
11 WHEREAS, professional journalists and technicians report that in February of 2016, KING 5  
12 encouraged the early retirement of many of its most experienced employees; and

13  
14 WHEREAS, if Tegna Inc. cuts costs by replacing and reducing its professional news-gathering  
15 staff, this precedent will be duplicated by other local broadcast news outlets in the Seattle  
16 area, severely undermining the critical role of local broadcasters as effective First  
17 Informers in public emergencies; and

18  
19 WHEREAS, on January 10, 2016, the Boston Globe reported that on March 29, 2016, the FCC  
20 will allow broadcasters to sell federally licensed frequencies to the highest bidder,  
21 creating the means for venture capitalists to take control of publicly owned broadcast  
22 licenses for the purpose of profit maximization rather than service to local communities;  
23 and

24  
25 WHEREAS, Tegna Inc., through the aforesaid policies and practices, operates contrary to the  
26 public interest; NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:**

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2 Section 1. It is the policy of the Seattle City Council that local broadcasters have a critical  
3 role in informing the public of emergencies, and, as in Oregon (ORS 401.239), should be legally  
4 designated “First Informers” with all the rights and responsibilities that entails. The Seattle City  
5 Council requests the Washington State Legislature codify this with legislation giving local  
6 broadcasters special access to public emergencies, so that real-time information in times of crisis  
7 (e.g., earthquake, wildfire, and extreme weather), can be provided consistent with FCC broadcast  
8 license responsibilities.  
9

10 Section 2. The Seattle City Council believes that the maintenance of professional, trained,  
11 local news staff at Seattle-area broadcast stations is critical to enable adequate coverage of local  
12 news and information, particularly in times of public emergencies, and to provide sufficient  
13 public information for an informed citizenry, and stimulate democratic discussion and debate.  
14 Substituting this local professional workforce with outsourced amateur or temporary journalists  
15 and technicians will undermine this critical functionality.  
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17 Section 3: The Seattle City Council requests and expects that Tegna Inc. will retain  
18 publicly owned airwaves currently used to broadcast KING 5, and maintain its professional  
19 quality unionized workforce to serve the public interest. The Seattle City Council further  
20 requests that Tegna Inc.’s labor negotiators at KING 5 bargain in good faith with IBEW 46 and  
21 IATSE 600 to meet the needs of their workforce and the public.  
22

23 Section 4. The Seattle City Council requests and expects that all local Seattle  
24 broadcasters will fully disclose their plans for the FCC’s March 29, 2016, spectrum auction, a  
25 sale of public airwaves, and any plans to substantially change longstanding contractual  
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1 commitments to the FCC to provide professionally produced local news in alignment with  
2 public-interest responsibilities, including responsibilities as First Informers.

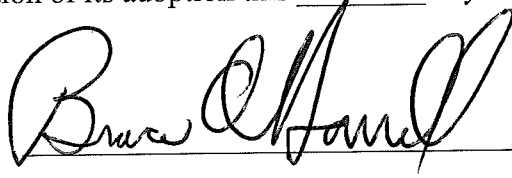
3           Section 5. The Seattle City Council affirms its commitment to high quality locally  
4 produced broadcast news serving the public interest over the publicly owned electronic  
5 spectrum.

6           Section 6. The Seattle City Council calls upon all public entities that may own Tegna  
7 stock to consider divestiture of said stock.  
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Adopted by the City Council the 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2016, and

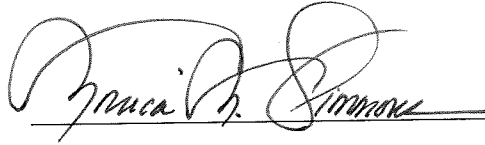
signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this 27<sup>th</sup> day of

June, 2016.



President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

Filed by me this 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2016.



Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)