

# City of Seattle



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## Director Office of Sustainability and Environment

Confirmation Packet  
May 19, 2015

Jessica Finn Coven



City of Seattle  
Edward B. Murray  
Mayor

FILED  
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2015 MAY 20 AM 9:20  
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May 19, 2015

The Honorable Tim Burgess  
President, Seattle City Council  
Seattle City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Council President Burgess:

I am pleased to transmit to the City Council the following confirmation packet for my appointment of Jessica Finn Coven as Director of the City's Office of Sustainability and Environment.

The materials in this packet are divided into two sections:

**A. Jessica Finn Coven**

This section contains Ms. Coven's appointment and oath of office forms, her resume, and the press release announcing her appointment.

**B. Background Checks**

This section contains the report to the Mayor's Office on Ms. Coven's background check.

Jessica Finn Coven is an experienced and committed leader in the movement to advance progressive environmental policies. She most recently served as the Washington Director of Climate Solutions, but has a long history in environmental policy, including with the U.S. Climate Action Network and Greenpeace.

Ms. Coven has deep connections to the local environmental community and is widely respected for her knowledge and passion regarding environmental sustainability. Those traits will be crucial as she implements Seattle's new Equity and Environment Initiative, recognizing that progressive environmental policy must reach all our diverse communities more equitably, including low-income families, immigrants, and people of color.

Office of the Mayor  
Seattle City Hall, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
600 Fourth Avenue  
PO Box 94749  
Seattle, Washington 98124-4749

Tel (206) 684-4000  
Fax: (206) 684-5360  
Hearing Impaired use the Washington Relay Service (7-1-1)  
[www.seattle.gov/mayor](http://www.seattle.gov/mayor)

The Honorable Tim Burgess  
May 19, 2015  
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Jessica will be an excellent leader for the Office of Sustainability and Environment and I urge you to confirm her.

If you have any questions about the attached materials or need additional information, please contact Deputy Mayor Kate Joncas at 206-684-3790, or via e-mail, at [kate.joncas@seattle.gov](mailto:kate.joncas@seattle.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Murray", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Edward B. Murray  
Mayor

**SECTION**

**A**



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray  
Mayor

May 11, 2015

Jessica Finn Coven  
Seattle, WA 98124  
Transmitted via e-mail

Dear Jessica,


It gives me great pleasure to appoint you to the position of Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment (Executive 2), effective June 12, 2015 at an annual salary of \$132,003.

Your appointment as Director is subject to City Council confirmation; therefore, you will need to attend the Council's confirmation hearings. After confirmation, you will serve at the pleasure of the Mayor.

Your contingent offer letter provided employment information related to the terms of your employment, benefits, vacation, holiday and sick leave. If you have questions about your employment with the City of Seattle please contact Susan Coskey, Human Resources Director, at 206-615-1622.

I look forward to working with you in your role as Director and wish you success. We have much work ahead of us, and I am confident that the Office will thrive beyond expectation under your leadership.

Sincerely,




Edward B. Murray  
Mayor

cc: Department of Human Resources



# City of Seattle Department Head Notice of Appointment

<b>Appointee Name:</b> <i>Jessica Finn Coven</i>		
<b>City Department Name:</b> <i>Office of Sustainability and Environment</i>		<b>Position Title:</b> <i>Director</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Appointment</b> <i>OR</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reappointment</b>		<b>Council Confirmation required?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Appointing Authority:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>Specify appointing authority</i>		<b>Term of Office:</b> <i>06/12/15 to serves at discretion of the Mayor</i>
<b>Legislated Authority:</b> <i>SMC 3.14.960</i>		
<b>Background:</b> <p>Jessica Finn Coven is an experienced and committed leader in the movement to advance progressive environmental policies. She most recently served as the Washington Director of Climate Solutions, but has a long history in environmental policy, including with the U.S. Climate Action Network and Greenpeace.</p> <p>Ms. Coven has deep connections to the local environmental community and is widely respected for her knowledge and passion regarding environmental sustainability. Those traits will be crucial as she implements Seattle's new Equity and Environment Initiative, recognizing that progressive environmental policy must reach all our diverse communities more equitably, including low-income families, immigrants, and people of color.</p>		
<b>Date of Appointment:</b> <i>05/19/2015</i>	<b>Authorizing Signature (original signature):</b> 	<b>Appointing Signatory:</b> <i>Edward B. Murray</i> <i>Mayor</i>



**CITY OF SEATTLE - STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OATH OF OFFICE**

**STATE OF WASHINGTON**

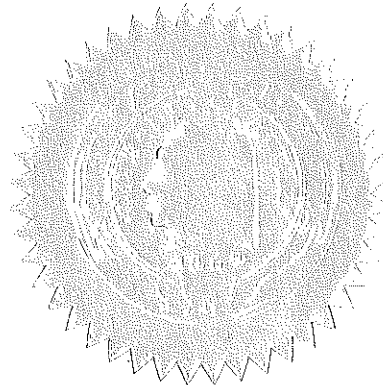
**COUNTY OF KING**

**I, Jessica Finn Coven, swear or affirm that I possess all the qualifications prescribed in the Seattle City Charter and the Seattle Municipal Code for the position of Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment; that I will support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Washington, and the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Seattle; and that I will faithfully conduct myself as *Director of Office of Sustainability and Environment*.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Jessica Finn Coven**

**Subscribed and sworn to before me  
this 13<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2015**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk**



**Jessica Finn Coven**

**Experience**

**Climate Solutions  
Washington Director  
Policy Specialist**

**Seattle, WA  
Oct 2011-Present  
Jul 2007-Oct 2011**

- Develop Climate Solutions' short- and long-term legislative strategy for strong climate, clean energy, and energy efficiency policies in Washington.
- Serve as a key Climate Solutions' spokesperson in the state, including communicating with the media, public presentations, testifying at legislative hearings and providing regular content for the organizational communications (e.g. email engagement, social media, blog posts, and newsletters).
- Work in concert with other Climate Solutions' programs to develop annual statewide organizational objectives.
- Represent Climate Solutions in the Washington Environmental Priorities Coalition and the Washington Blue/Green Alliance.
- Collaborate with allies in the business, labor, environmental, and other communities to develop shared objectives and strategic initiatives.
- Manage a team of 2-3 people.
- Support Climate Solutions' development team by meeting with major donors, speaking at fundraising events and providing content for grant applications.
- Create factsheets and other written materials on the subject of climate change, translating technical subject matter into documents easily understood by those with no topical knowledge.

**U.S. Climate Action Network  
Program Director**

**Washington, D.C.  
2005-May 2006,  
Sep 2006-2007**

- Briefed top ranking U.S. government officials on national and international climate policy.
- Worked with dozens of member organizations to develop joint objectives for international climate summits, including shared policy positions.
- Created weekly e-newsletter for member organizations, including writing and editing content.
- Researched, wrote and submitted grants for funding.
- Composed summary briefs of scientific and economic papers.

**Greenpeace China  
International Advisor**

**Beijing, PRC  
May-Sep 2006**

- Developed campaign plans and strategies around the issue of climate change and renewable energy in China.
- Managed a team of 4 on an interim basis while leading search for a permanent team leader.
- Hired and trained junior and senior staff members to put in place a sustainable team of leaders.
- Lead author on a report analyzing state and city-level carbon mitigation strategies in the U.S. and how similar tactics could be implemented in Hong Kong.

**Greenpeace  
Climate and Energy Campaigner**

**Washington, D.C.  
2002-2005**

- Advocated for changes in U.S. climate change policy at international climate negotiations, such as the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.



- Represented Greenpeace at public events and at local citizens/town forums.
- Developed campaign materials, including fact sheets, press releases and web content.

#### Education

The Johns Hopkins University  
School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)  
Master of Arts, Economics and Energy Policy

Washington, D.C.  
May 2007

Barnard College  
Columbia University  
Bachelor of Arts, East Asian Languages and Cultures

New York, NY  
May 2002

- Graduated *cum laude*.
- Recipient of the Peter H. Juviler Human Rights Award.

#### Featured Speaker

- Extensive experience public speaking, including keynoting large events. Samples of public speaking events include:
  - Washington Conservation Voters, *Breakfast of Champions* (2013)
  - Northwest Environmental Business Council, *Future Energy Conference* (2013)
  - Environmental Grantmakers Association, *annual retreat* (2010)
  - Climate and Energy Funders Group, *annual meeting* (2009)
  - Inaugural *Good Jobs, Green Jobs* conference (2008)

#### Relevant knowledge

- Conversational Mandarin.
- Extensive experience working with media, including print, radio and television.
- Expert knowledge of carbon pricing mechanisms, including cap and trade and carbon tax programs.
- Regional climate change pacts such as the Pacific Coast Collaborative, Western Climate Initiative and Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.
- Washington State climate, renewable energy and energy efficiency laws.

#### Volunteer

- Washington Conservation Voters, Board of Directors
  - *Vice-chair* 2010-Present
  - *Political Chair* 2013-Present
  - 2011-2012
- Puget Sound Sage, Board of Directors 2011-Present
- Students for a Free Tibet, Board of Directors 2005-2008

Jessica Finn Coven





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References

**KC Golden**

Chair, 350.org; Policy Advisor, Climate Solutions



  


**Jay Manning**

Partner, Cascadia Law Group; Board Chair, Washington Environmental Council



  


**Stephanie Solien**



**Ken Johnson**

Director, State Regulatory Affairs, Puget Sound Energy

**Rashad Morris**

Program Officer, Bullitt Foundation



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Contact:** Jason Kelly, Mayor's Office Press Secretary, 206.684.8379  
Sara Wysocki, Sustainability & Environment, 206.233.7014  
Lois Maag, Neighborhoods, 206.615.0950

### **Mayor names new directors at Sustainability & Environment, Department of Neighborhoods**

*Bernie Matsuno steps down after four years at DON*

**SEATTLE** (May 8, 2015) – Seattle Mayor Ed Murray today named Jessica Finn Coven to serve as director of the Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) and Kathy Nyland to serve as director of the Department of Neighborhoods (DON). Bernie Matsuno, who has served as director of DON since 2011, will be stepping down effective June 2.

Finn Coven comes to OSE after serving as Washington Director of Climate Solutions since 2011. Previously she worked at the U.S. Climate Action Network and Greenpeace. She serves on the board of directors of Washington Conservation Voters and Puget Sound Sage.

“Jessica brings deep connections to Seattle’s environmental community,” said Murray. “Her commitment to environmental justice will lend strength to Seattle’s new Equity and Environment Initiative. The benefits of progressive environmental policy must reach all our diverse communities more equitably, including low-income families, immigrants and people of color.”

“Anyone who knows Jessica appreciates her deep knowledge of environmental policy,” said Rashad Morris of the Bullitt Foundation. “Her commitment to economic and racial equity makes this an especially strong choice as Seattle works to bridge issues of sustainability and social justice.”

“Seattle has long been a proof point that we can create more broadly shared prosperity by prioritizing a clean and healthy environment,” said Finn Coven. “Mayor Murray has been a leader throughout his career on sustainable transportation solutions and equitable responses to climate change. I’m absolutely thrilled to join his team and to be part of Seattle’s next chapter in clean energy development and ensuring the health of all Seattle’s family.”

Finn Coven will be paid \$132,000 and start at OSE on June 12. Finn Coven replaces Jill Simmons, who announced her decision to step down as director of OSE in April.

Nyland is currently a senior policy advisor on land use and planning in the Mayor's Office of Policy and Innovation. She is a former chief of staff to City Councilmember Sally Bagshaw. Before joining city government, she served on several community councils, founded the Georgetown Merchants' Association and chaired Seattle's City Neighborhood Council.

"During my first year as mayor, Kathy has become a trusted advisor," said Murray. "Her personal history as a community advocate, her strong relationships with neighborhood leaders throughout the city, and her policy acumen make her the natural choice to step into this role. I look forward to her leadership in community conversations on private development, public investments and support for vibrant neighborhoods in our city."

"I am honored by this opportunity to continue to serve the Mayor and the city in this new role at the Department of Neighborhoods," says Nyland. "I've long believed that our communities are our strongest resources and I look forward to bringing more voices to the table. We want to support and strengthen all our neighborhoods in Seattle."

Nyland joins DON on June 2 and will earn \$136,000.

Matsuno came out of retirement to serve as director of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, intending to serve only a few months, but staying on for more than four years. She developed and expanded new community programs at DON, including the People's Academy for Community Engagement (PACE) and the Public Outreach and Engagement Liaison (POEL) program to expand civic engagement, especially in underrepresented communities.

"Bernie has been a true champion of our neighborhoods and a helpful advisor to me on community issues and needs," said Murray. "She has advocated effectively for the community to have a greater voice in City government and their neighborhood – an important role that the department will sustain."

"I'm very appreciative of the opportunity to serve in Mayor Murray's administration, but I am looking forward to this new chapter in my life," said Matsuno. "I'm excited about this transition and intend to continue my professional work for the people of Seattle, as well as volunteer in my community."

"Bernie Matsuno was one of my first and best hires 27 years ago," said Jim Diers, former DON director. "Bernie initiated a powerful leadership development program and innovative outreach strategy to ensure that all voices are heard. I'm excited that Bernie is passing the torch to Kathy Nyland, someone who I have long admired for her leadership of the Georgetown neighborhood. I know that she believes deeply in the department's mission and I can't wait to see what she does in taking it to the next level."

Matsuno will continue to lend her expertise to future City community-engagement projects.

**SECTION**

**B**



# City of Seattle

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Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Seattle Department of Human Resources

Susan L. Coskey, Director

Date: May 19, 2015

To: Adam Schaefer, City Budget Office

From: Melissa Beatty, HR Manager, Seattle Department of Human Resources

Subject: **BACKGROUND CHECK – Jessica Finn Coven**

The HR Department has received a copy of Jessica Finn Coven's background check run by A-Check Global. There were no findings that would impact the employment eligibility of Ms. Finn Coven.

cc: Personnel File

