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Dear Seattle-King County Chapter of Black Lives Matter,

The Seattle Pride Board of Directors is sad to hear of your withdrawal from the parade. The board was hopeful that inviting you as a Grand Marshal could be a step towards collaborating and partnering for social justice. After reading your reasons for withdrawal, we honor and respect your decision. We hope in due time we can collaborate to work towards making change together.

People band together to form groups and organizations that strive to achieve a collective goal. Seattle Pride was formed to create unity, honor diversity, and achieve equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community. Our founders began this work by organizing a freedom of speech march that is now known as the Seattle Pride Parade. As the lives and struggles of the LGBTQ+ community have evolved, so has our march. The appearance and tone might change but what remains the same is our resolution to hold this march in a responsible manner, allowing our participants to take the street and voice their demands, celebrate their identity, and come together to build community.

Seattle Pride would like to address your concerns surrounding the ethics of our funding, to which we have an economic, social, and a principled response. Economically, an event like ours would not be possible without multiple sources of funding. Socially, we believe the partnership of some corporations and institutions helped us move the needle on LGBTQ+ worker rights, anti-LGBTQ+ bills, and Marriage Equality. We hope it will also move the needle against bathroom bills and other injustices faced by the LGBTQ+ community. And on principle, we are opposed to excluding a group of LGBTQ+ individuals from participating in the parade because of who they are employed by. Budgets and funding sources can be changed. The relationship with our sponsors can evolve. Not allowing an employee affinity group to march and show their Pride is something we feel goes against the mission and purpose of our event.

For some members of our community, the Seattle Pride Parade honors their individuality, their identity, and their liberation from the closet. For others, it is a procession to remember movement founders like Marsha P. Johnson and the many who were lost to HIV/AIDS. And for many more, it is still a march that demands the world pay attention to our humanity and dignity. We believe Pride is a personal experience collectively expressed, and we do not regret that the self-expression from our participants has the capacity to turn sorrow into joy and struggle into celebration.

Non-profit organizations, institutions and corporations will always have room to create social and economic change. It is up to individuals that take part in these organizations to continuously help them strive to become better. Our board humbly welcomes feedback and

criticism in hopes that we can take steps to improve our organization. In recent years, we have taken action to address what the community has asked of us, and Seattle Pride is aware of the improvements it can make and the work it still has to accomplish. We will continue to invite you to engage in dialogue surrounding the issues your organization is focused on addressing. The struggle against oppression is most successful when it is fought on all fronts and by many allies. Seattle Pride wishes to be yours and hopes you will be ours.

In solidarity,

Seattle Pride Board of Directors