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Port of Portland Clarifies Free Speech Approach at PDX

On Jan. 28 and 29, Portland International Airport was one of many airports faced with large numbers of people arriving at the facility to express their views about President Trump's executive order on immigration.

“Our hearts go out to the families that were caught up in the confusion surrounding this executive order,” said Port of Portland Executive Director Bill Wyatt. “If we end up with detainees at PDX—a decision that would be made entirely by Customs and Border Protection, the federal agency that oversees international entries at our airport—we would do all we can to support friends and family that might be waiting in the airport terminal.”

PDX provides customers and airport users a safe, secure and customer-friendly travel experience. Following the sizable demonstrations at PDX, which created significant safety concerns for passengers and employees, Port management is changing its approach to groups of more than 10 people who wish to exercise free speech activities at PDX.

Individuals and organizations frequently use the airport's free speech program, obtaining permits to express their views and/or hand out materials inside the terminal. This permit program will continue to be in effect. The following detail the Port's updated program for groups of 10 or more:

- The Port will now offer Free Speech Permits that designate a Free Speech Zone outside the terminal. This zone will likely be located on the upper outer roadway because it provides a highly visible covered area with convenient access to and from the MAX Train platform.
- Those who wish to exercise their right to free speech at the airport should contact the Port in advance by emailing freespeech@portofportland.com. There is currently no charge for Free Speech Permits.

- Effective immediately, the Port will not allow roving protests at the airport. The Port cannot allow activity that interferes with airport operations, compromises airport safety and security, or disrupts airport businesses, employees and travelers.

Under applicable law, airports are not public forums for free speech activity. The Port elects to provide space for free speech activities, but restricts the time, place and manner in which these activities occur to make sure the airport continues to operate smoothly and safely for those working at and traveling through the airport.

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