

**From:** [Umpstead, Keahna \(CAAA\)](#)  
**To:** [Kerney, Charlotte \(CAAA\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: WA Department of Commerce and CAAA Advisory Committee  
**Date:** Thursday, April 2, 2026 8:53:21 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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**From:** Prince, Ed (CAAA) <ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 2, 2025 1:30 PM  
**To:** Sardinias, Paula <paulasardinias@fmsglobalstrategies.com>; Linda Smith <linda-smith1@comcast.net>; Griffin, Michelle (COM) <michelle.griffin@commerce.wa.gov>; Todd, Joseph <jtodd@bellevuewa.gov>; Umpstead, Keahna (CAAA) <keahna.umpstead@caaa.wa.gov>; Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov; derick@besrwa.org; dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us; mjj22@uw.edu; sgray@thenbcf.org; info@thenbcf.org; Bailey, Michael (CAAA Commissioner) <michael.bailey@caaa.wa.gov>; Retlin, Cary (COM) <cary.retlin@commerce.wa.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: WA Department of Commerce and CAAA Advisory Committee

Good afternoon,

We can have this discussion in more detail on the 10th. I appreciate all the input. In general, we need to remember that we followed the process, and we have to act like it. When we over explain it makes it look like we did something wrong. See all of you on the 10th.

**Edward O. Prince**

**Executive Director**

**WA State Commission on African American Affairs**

**360-725-5663 (office)**

**360-529-1434(mobile)**

**[ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov)**

Mission: To improve the well-being of African Americans by increasing their access to participation in the fields of government, business, education, health care, and other areas.

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**From:** Paula Sardinias <[paulasardinias@fmsglobalstrategies.com](mailto:paulasardinias@fmsglobalstrategies.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, December 2, 2025 7:40 AM

**To:** Linda Smith <[linda-smith1@comcast.net](mailto:linda-smith1@comcast.net)>; Griffin, Michelle (COM) <[michelle.griffin@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:michelle.griffin@commerce.wa.gov)>; Todd, Joseph <[jtodd@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:jtodd@bellevuewa.gov)>; Prince, Ed (CAAA) <[ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov)>; Umpstead, Keahna (CAAA) <[keahna.umpstead@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:keahna.umpstead@caaa.wa.gov)>; [Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov) <[auzimuth.jackson@leg.wa.gov](mailto:auzimuth.jackson@leg.wa.gov)>; [derick@besrwa.org](mailto:derick@besrwa.org) <[derick@besrwa.org](mailto:derick@besrwa.org)>; [dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us) <[dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us)>; [mjj22@uw.edu](mailto:mjj22@uw.edu) <[mjj22@uw.edu](mailto:mjj22@uw.edu)>; [sgray@thenbcf.org](mailto:sgray@thenbcf.org) <[sgray@thenbcf.org](mailto:sgray@thenbcf.org)>; [info@thenbcf.org](mailto:info@thenbcf.org) <[info@thenbcf.org](mailto:info@thenbcf.org)>; Bailey, Michael (CAAA Commissioner) <[michael.bailey@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:michael.bailey@caaa.wa.gov)>; Retlin, Cary (COM) <[cary.retlin@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:cary.retlin@commerce.wa.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: WA Department of Commerce and CAAA Advisory Committee

External Email

Dr. Smith,

I understand, and you have my full support. I never question your heart. My concern is simply that we cannot afford to pause this important work. We have already heard from community, and once we have completed our responsibilities with integrity, we must be willing to stand on that integrity. Yielding to community pressure sets a dangerous precedent for bullying. Community should be taught how to engage properly with the legislative process and with state agencies. What we are witnessing now is not that.

We honor the protest period because we honor community voices, and everyone deserves to be heard. But we also have a responsibility to honor the hard work of the people who applied in good faith. Integrity requires that we do what is right by everyone involved.

Right now, an organization is being publicly shamed for winning a meritorious bid. None of us should condone this behavior. It could just as easily happen to any of us. And if it did, how would we feel?

Respectfully,

*Paula F. Sardinias, NBPLA* (she/her/ella)

President & CEO

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**From:** Linda Smith <[linda-smith1@comcast.net](mailto:linda-smith1@comcast.net)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 2, 2025 7:08 AM  
**To:** Paula Sardinias <[paulasardinias@msglobalstrategies.com](mailto:paulasardinias@msglobalstrategies.com)>; Griffin, Michelle (COM) <[michelle.griffin@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:michelle.griffin@commerce.wa.gov)>; Todd, Joseph <[jtodd@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:jtodd@bellevuewa.gov)>; Prince, Ed (CAAA) <[ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov)>; Umpstead, Keahna (CAAA) <[keahna.umpstead@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:keahna.umpstead@caaa.wa.gov)>; [Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov); [derick@besrwa.org](mailto:derick@besrwa.org); [dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us); [mjj22@uw.edu](mailto:mjj22@uw.edu); [sgray@thenbcf.org](mailto:sgray@thenbcf.org); [info@thenbcf.org](mailto:info@thenbcf.org); Bailey, Michael (CAAA Commissioner) <[michael.bailey@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:michael.bailey@caaa.wa.gov)>; Retlin, Cary (COM) <[cary.retlin@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:cary.retlin@commerce.wa.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: WA Department of Commerce and CAAA Advisory Committee

Thank you for your perspective and I am walking by faith. My Pause is simply for us to discuss so that, let me say that I understand. I cannot speak for everyone because everyone has different a perspective.

Thank you,

Dr. Linda

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**From:** [Paula Sardinias](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 2, 2025 7:04 AM  
**To:** [Linda Smith](#); [Griffin, Michelle \(COM\)](#); [Todd, Joseph](#); [Prince, Ed \(CAAA\)](#); [Umpstead, Keahna \(CAAA\)](#); [Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov); [derick@besrwa.org](mailto:derick@besrwa.org); [dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us); [mjj22@uw.edu](mailto:mjj22@uw.edu); [sgray@thenbcf.org](mailto:sgray@thenbcf.org); [info@thenbcf.org](mailto:info@thenbcf.org); [Bailey, Michael \(CAAA Commissioner\)](#); [Retlin, Cary \(COM\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: WA Department of Commerce and CAAA Advisory Committee

Dr. Smith,

Thank you for sharing your perspective. I'd like to offer mine—shaped by studying this field since 1991 and by tracing and documenting my lineage to chattel slavery back to the 1780s.

No one Black person—**particularly in a non-colonized state**—owns the narrative of suffering or holds exclusive moral authority on the question of harm. As descendants of slavery, we all carry elements of that trauma. Some of the deepest scars are internal, rooted in what Carter G. Woodson called “the colonized mind.” As he wrote in *The Mis-Education of the Negro*:

**“If you control a man’s thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions.”**

and

**“The oppressor...teaches the Negro to despise himself.”**

That is the danger I see when a handful of loud voices claim to be “**the community**.” Who exactly are they speaking for? It is certainly not the 500,000 Black Washingtonians who hold a full spectrum of viewpoints. My organization alone represents 917 community-based organizations, and even we would never assert we speak for every Black person. What we are witnessing online is not a community groundswell—it is fewer than 70 comments, amplified by a breach of confidentiality.

**And that breach matters.**

I have served as a scorer for many RFPs across multiple agencies. There is no monolithic process—sometimes scorers confer; often we do not. The directive here was clear: score the proposals on their merits, budget, capacity, qualifications, and methodological rigor—not on popularity, personality, or community pressure. Academic research demands academic standards. To avoid skewed findings, you need evaluators who are trained, objective, and allowing the research—not their preconceived beliefs—to determine the KPIs and outcomes. That was our charge, and we honored it.

The current upheaval is not about justice; it is the result of individuals abandoning ethics for outrage. Nothing in the RCW, Commerce guidance, or AAG instructions allows scorers to substitute public pressure for process. *Integrity cannot be retrofitted after the fact.*

**You call for a pause. Respectfully, I do not.**

**Black people have been “paused” since 1619.**

**What this moment requires is courage.**

We are facing a \$15B budget deficit. As someone who moves billions of dollars in policy and budget negotiations every year, I can assure you: it will not become easier to secure reparations funding if a valid study concludes it is warranted. Delaying this process only weakens the momentum, the legal foundation, and the fiscal window we have right now.

*I honor your service, your history, and your commitment to justice. But justice is not achieved by halting a lawful process to appease a loud minority. Justice is achieved by truth, by rigor.*

and by the steadfast discipline to complete the work with integrity.

Thank you for listening—and for engaging in this moment with seriousness and conviction.

In closing, perhaps I did not get the memo of fear, because I was raised by a preacher from Georgia (Rev. Gillis). We walk by faith not by sight in order to please God. I'm not afraid of dissent.

In service to the community,

*Paula F. Sardinas, NBPLA* (she/her/ella)

President & CEO

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**From:** Linda Smith <[linda-smith1@comcast.net](mailto:linda-smith1@comcast.net)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, December 2, 2025 5:51 AM

**To:** Griffin, Michelle (COM) <[michelle.griffin@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:michelle.griffin@commerce.wa.gov)>; Todd, Joseph <[jtodd@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:jtodd@bellevuewa.gov)>; Prince, Ed (CAAA) <[ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:ed.prince@caaa.wa.gov)>; Umpstead, Keahna (CAAA) <[keahna.umpstead@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:keahna.umpstead@caaa.wa.gov)>; [Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov); [derick@besrwa.org](mailto:derick@besrwa.org); [dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us); [mjj22@uw.edu](mailto:mjj22@uw.edu); Paula Sardinas <[paulasardinas@fmsglobalstrategies.com](mailto:paulasardinas@fmsglobalstrategies.com)>; [sgray@thenbcf.org](mailto:sgray@thenbcf.org); [info@thenbcf.org](mailto:info@thenbcf.org); Bailey, Michael (CAAA Commissioner) <[michael.bailey@caaa.wa.gov](mailto:michael.bailey@caaa.wa.gov)>; Retlin, Cary (COM) <[cary.retlin@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:cary.retlin@commerce.wa.gov)>

**Cc:** Dr. Linda Smith <[linda-smith1@comcast.net](mailto:linda-smith1@comcast.net)>

**Subject:** RE: WA Department of Commerce and CAAA Advisory Committee

Tuesday, December 1, 2025

Greetings: First, to the African American Affairs Committee, Mr. Todd and honorable committee members, Ms. Griffin and Staff, I am honored to serve on this committee. As a descendant of chattel slavery and growing up in the South in deep racism, this process is so important for repairing harm that has been done historically over four hundred years to Black people. I also thank you Ms. Griffin for the reminder of the confidentiality of the process and of our agreement to honor that. I respect the process because it is who I am. I have served as Director of Human Resources for many years of a government agency and served on many selection boards, even for my city government. I have maintained confidentiality throughout the years and respect processes and will always honor that.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated: “there comes a time when silence is a betrayal of our soul. He also says, ““There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right.” I believe that moment exists. I believe it is important to not be silence and that Justice is always about doing the right things. As I do not know the official awardee, I don’t know how other people voted on their individual rating, but what I expected and thought would happen that another conversation would take place before a contractor was awarded where more objective conversation could have taken place. Individual ratings are always subjective.

With that said the community is in upheaval about the awardee. Somehow, they have received the information about the awardee and it is creating very negative vibes and dissension in the community. It is not just one person, but groups of people that are disseminating the information on social media, and to vary circles. I know that we are in the protest period.

My understanding of reparation is to repair harm. This process is intended to repair harm that has been done not to create more harm. If what is being done is a deterrent to the community, as a Leaders of the Black Community and of

good moral conscience I believe more discernments must take place.

I humbly request that we **PAUSE** this process before we move forward. No decision is worth damaging an already damaged relationship. I am not willing to sacrifice my soul nor my community for the sake of proving a point. Thank you for listening and hearing my voice and voice of the community. Justice is always right at any given moment.

Thank you for listening to the voice of the people.

Dr. Linda M. Smith

Sr. Pastor Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Baptist  
Church

Executive Director, Renton King County Alliance  
for Justice  
Board member, SAARC

**"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Dr. Martin Luther  
King Jr.**

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**From:** [Griffin, Michelle \(COM\)](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 25, 2025 2:04 PM

**To:** [Todd, Joseph](#); [Prince, Ed \(CAAA\)](#); [Umpstead, Keahna \(CAAA\)](#); [Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Auzimuth.Jackson@leg.wa.gov); [derick@besrwa.org](mailto:derick@besrwa.org); [dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us); [linda-smith1@comcast.net](mailto:linda-smith1@comcast.net); [mjj22@uw.edu](mailto:mjj22@uw.edu); [Sardinas, Paula](#); [sgray@thenbcf.org](mailto:sgray@thenbcf.org); [info@thenbcf.org](mailto:info@thenbcf.org); [Bailey, Michael \(CAAA Commissioner\)](#); [Retlin, Cary \(COM\)](#)

**Subject:** WA Department of Commerce and CAAA Advisory Committee

**When:** Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**Location:** <https://wastatecommerce.zoom.us/j/87366006531?pwd=uJWyo07NSRdaBVR36TiMomKfa9tUjH.1>

Good afternoon everyone,

I am conducting the debriefs for the unsuccessful bidders this week. Once the protest period ends, then I will send you all the name of the Apparent Successful bidder.

This meeting on 12/10/25 will be to discuss the prioritization of any new funding for the study.

Thank you and Happy Thanksgiving!

Griffin, Michelle (COM) is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://wastatecommerce.zoom.us/j/87366006531?pwd=uJWyo07NSRdaBVR36TiMomKfa9tUjH.1>

Meeting ID: 873 6600 6531

Passcode: 917014

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One tap mobile

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+19712471195,,87366006531#,,,,\*917014# US (Portland)

Join instructions

<https://wastatecommerce.zoom.us/meetings/87366006531/invitations?signature=Z0ejsQEsWdV0RjmCuc2WwE64h04XflvuMpbLnanlyWI>