

Dear Seattle Metro Chamber members:

Congressman Denny Heck of Washington's 10th Congressional District recently announced he will not seek re-election in 2020. This caught many of us by surprise and it also presents a rare opportunity.

This morning, I declared my candidacy for the open seat and will run for Congress in 2020. I'm running to serve the district and our state with a focus on housing, healthcare, trade, climate change, job training, infrastructure and policies to help make the economy more inclusive and resilient for all of us.

What does this mean for the Chamber? I will step down as President & CEO at the end of January. Running for public office, especially for Congress, is demanding and time-consuming. The Chamber needs the undivided attention of its CEO.

Our Executive Committee and I will work on a plan after the holiday break to ensure a smooth transition with as little disruption as possible to Chamber employees and members. We will share it with you when we have something concrete.

Thank you for the opportunity to lead this organization. We have made great strides in a short period of time. We've raised our profile, grown our membership, incubated the Housing Connector and now serve as the regional business retention and expansion agency for King County. The Seattle Metro Chamber is on a positive trajectory and will remain an essential civic leader in the Seattle region.

Sincerely,
Marilyn

Marilyn Strickland

President & CEO

[Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce](#)

Dear Seattle Metro Chamber members,

Marilyn's leap back to public service is exciting news. We need good people willing to run, to listen to constituents, to care deeply about the elements of an inclusive economy, and to retain and create reason for optimism about our government. I am personally grateful for Marilyn's willingness to step up and wish her all the best in this endeavor!

At an organizational level, I am also grateful that Marilyn and the Chamber team have navigated the last two years with a commitment to bringing people together, driving more

inclusive business success, and bringing a truly regional view. I have full confidence that the team will continue to build on the positive work of the past two years.

As Marilyn noted, we're working in the next few weeks to establish a plan for interim Chamber leadership to 1) provide support and guidance on top priorities for near-term work, while 2) developing a longer-term shared agenda for the next phase of Chamber work. These should be grounded in our "fundamentals" as a membership organization, delivering value to members, being a trusted resource for insight on creating inclusive business and economic success, and influencing effective and accountable governing across our region broadly and proactively on targeted issues of great value.

Thank you for your support of the Chamber, of our members, and of the team working to advance our goals each day. Best wishes for the holidays, and for success in your individual companies and together as a community in the new year!

Sincerely,
Diana

Diana Birkett Rakow

Vice President, External Relations, Alaska Airlines
Board Chair, Seattle Metro Chamber