

*The following letter was sent to selected companies in Washington State on January 27, 2012.*

*The companies were Alaska Air, Amazon, Boeing, Costco, Expeditors, F5 Networks, JC Penney, Keybank, McDonalds, Nordstrom, PG&E, Perkins Coie, Paccar, T-Mobile, State Farm, Safeway, REI and Walgreens.*



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TIDES  
WHAT'S POSSIBLE

January 27, 2012

Dear {Company}:

The signatories to this letter are investors who believe that environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors can affect a corporation's long-term performance. We regularly engage with companies in our portfolios to promote sustainable business practices, through shareholder dialogue and resolutions.

We are writing today to encourage you to make a public statement backing Washington State's marriage equality legislation ([Senate Bill 6239](#) and [House 2516](#)), which is expected to pass imminently. Shortly thereafter, we anticipate significant pushback through the referendum process. Along with other corporate voices, your strong statement of support would bolster public sentiment in favor of the legislation.

We commend the work of Washington and northwest-based organizations dedicated to equality and social justice such as Equity Foundation, Pride Foundation and the Washington United for Marriage coalition. Like us, these organizations have long promoted the adoption of workplace policies that afford equal treatment of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) employees, such as inclusive language in nondiscrimination policies, and equal spousal benefits. We believe it is not only the right thing to do, but that it is smart business practice that enhances competitiveness in attracting and retaining employees from the widest possible talent pool.

As more states begin to grant same-sex marriage licenses, recruiting LGBT employees to a state that does not offer or recognize them becomes more difficult. You may know that Washington-based employers such as Concur, Group Health, Microsoft, RealNetworks, Starbucks and Vulcan and other employers such as Alcoa, Google and Nike recently endorsed Washington's marriage equality legislation. In a January 19 blog entry, Microsoft's general counsel Brad Smith wrote:

As other states recognize marriage equality, Washington's employers are at a disadvantage if we cannot offer a similar, inclusive environment to our talented employees, our top recruits and their families. Employers in the technology sector face an unprecedented national and global competition for top talent. Despite progress made in recent years with domestic partnership rights, same-sex couples in Washington still hold a different status from their neighbors. Marriage equality in Washington would put employers here on an equal footing with employers in the six other states that already recognize the committed relationships of same-sex couples – Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. This in turn will help us continue to compete for talent.

...Like the New York bill, we believe Washington's legislation should be passed into law. It will make our state and our economy stronger.

We urge you to lend your support and encourage you to coordinate with the Washington United for Marriage coalition ([washingtonunitedformarriage.org](http://washingtonunitedformarriage.org)) by contacting Zach Silk at 206.351.6437.

We thank you for considering our request, and look forward to your response. If you have any questions

Sincerely,



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Pride Foundation (Seattle, Washington)



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