



SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201-3335
(509) 625-6255

Ben Stuckart
Council President

June 13, 2018

Dave Leach
President and Chief Executive Officer
Greyhound Lines, Inc.
350 N. St. Paul Street
Dallas, TX 75201

Tricia Martinez
Senior Legal Officer
Greyhound Lines, Inc.
350 N. St. Paul Street
Dallas, TX 75201

Re: Greyhound Compliance with Spokane's Human Rights Law (Title 18)

Dear Mr. Leach and Ms. Martinez:

Title 18 of the Spokane Municipal Code prohibits discrimination, and its enactment was an example of the City's commitment to promoting an equitable and inclusive environment, so that all people in our city "have an equal opportunity to participate fully in the life of the City."¹ To that end, the Spokane City Council seeks to remove barriers "to equal participation...in public accommodations."² I am writing to express my concern that Greyhound's decision to allow Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials onto their buses at the Intermodal Center in Spokane may contravene these efforts and may violate Title 18 of the Spokane Municipal Code.

Over the past year, I have learned that Greyhound routinely grants CBP access to its passengers while at the Intermodal Center. The actions of CBP, both on the buses and in the Intermodal Center, have had a profound impact on some Spokane residents.³ Reports indicate that CBP may be unfairly targeting people of color, in part by making assumptions about their citizenship status. In other words, CBP may be engaging in racial profiling at the Intermodal Center. For example, in January, CBP agents reportedly confronted a Latino family on a Greyhound bus at the Intermodal Center, asking them, "Are you illegal?" and, "Do you have your documents on you?"⁴ In March, when a Spokane resident traveling to Seattle on a

¹ SMC 18.01.020(B), <https://my.spokanecity.org/smc/?Section=18.01.020>.

² *Id.* "Place of public resort, accommodation, assemblage or amusement" includes facilities used "for public conveyance or transportation on land...including stations and terminals thereof and the garaging of vehicles." SMC 18.01.030(U), <https://my.spokanecity.org/smc/?Section=18.01.030>.

³ Suzanne Phan, "Father, son with DACA detained on Greyhound bus by Border Patrol in Spokane," KOMO News, Jan. 11, 2018, <http://komonews.com/news/local/federal-way-father-and-son-with-daca-detained-in-spokane-on-greyhound-bus-by-border-patrol>.

⁴ *Id.*



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Greyhound bus reportedly was questioned at the Intermodal Station, she explained that agents “only spent time questioning individuals that had darker skin or had an accent.”⁵

Because Greyhound allows CBP agents to access their passengers, those agents park their trucks in the parking lot of the Intermodal Center, walk through the facility, question people on the grounds while buses board, and subsequently board buses which are about to depart. In that context, it is easy to understand that passengers and others at the Intermodal Center feel intimidated and subjected to unfair treatment and questioning. This, in turn, can make it less likely that our City’s residents and visitors, particularly people of color, feel free to use the City’s Intermodal Center. As one rider stopped at the Intermodal Center put it: “Such a mundane act as getting on a bus should not strike fear in the hearts of people of color.”⁶ Greyhound’s decision to allow CBP agents to access their passengers in Spokane can create and maintain a fearful and hostile environment on buses and at the Intermodal Center for people of color in Spokane. This is the type of situation our anti-discrimination ordinances seek to avoid.

As the City Council President, I want businesses operating in Spokane to comply with our laws which require equal access to public accommodations and conveyances. I am aware that Greyhound has publicly stated, in another context, that it is “required” to allow CBP agents onto its buses.⁷ However, as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has recently contended, “Greyhound has the Fourth Amendment right to refuse consent to board its buses.”⁸

Greyhound has been a long-term tenant of Spokane’s Intermodal Center and I look forward to continuing that relationship. Spokane’s anti-discrimination ordinances mean little if the City of Spokane cannot ensure compliance with them on its own property, such as the Intermodal Center. I would like to set up a meeting to discuss this issue with you further and to understand whether you would consider alternative actions Greyhound can take to ensure that all people, regardless of their race or national origin, feel welcome in your buses and stations. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,


Ben Stuckart
President, Spokane City Council

cc: Spokane City Council
Ed Lukas, Asset Management Director

⁵ Ava Sharifi statement to Spokane City Council, March, 25, 2018.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Greyhound, Statement regarding incident in Ft. Lauderdale*, Jan. 22, 2018, <http://bloggreyhound.com/news/statement-regarding-incident-in-ft-lauderdale/>.

⁸ *See attached ACLU Letter to Greyhound.*