

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **KOMO-TV AND REPORTER TRACY VEDDER EARN OPEN GOVERNMENT AWARD FOR WINNING PUBLIC ACCESS TO POLICE DASH-CAM VIDEOS**

Police dash-cam videos are now subject to greater public disclosure, thanks to a legal fight waged by KOMO-TV and investigative reporter Tracy Vedder against the Seattle Police Department.

For that accomplishment, on Thursday, November 6, the Washington Coalition for Open Government presented the station and Vedder a Key Award, given to organizations or individuals who do something notable to advance the cause of open government.

Two years ago Vedder filed a public disclosure request for police in-car video recordings and logs of such recordings. The department denied the request, citing a policy of withholding video recordings and logs for three years on grounds they could be used in potential litigation.

KOMO-TV sued. The station lost its initial challenge in King County Superior Court. But the state Supreme Court in June issued a 5-4 decision declaring that the department could not claim a blanket exemption for those records, although it could withhold them in limited circumstances. Holding that the mere possibility of litigation was not grounds for withholding public records, the court sent the case back to the lower court for rehearing.

“The ruling was a close call,” said WCOG President Toby Nixon. “But the outcome is a win for public disclosure and another crack in the wall of secrecy that the Seattle Police Department has habitually tried to maintain over the years. With transparency comes more accountability for a troubled police department entering a new era of reforms under its new chief.”

Join WCOG and help in the non-partisan fight for transparent government and open public participation. WCOG was founded in 2002 by a group of individuals representing organizations with a broad spectrum of opinions and interests but all dedicated to the principles of strengthening the state’s open government laws and protecting the public’s access to government at all levels. WCOG stands for the

principle that transparency and public participation are essential building blocks of good government.

Membership is open to the public. For more information contact WCOG at 6351 Seaview Avenue NW, Seattle, WA 98107-2664, on the web at [www.washingtoncog.org](http://www.washingtoncog.org), or call (206) 782-0393.

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