

Application Related Information

Application: Application Verified
Grad Program Applying To: MPA

Iteration Name: 202510_GR_G
Program Name: MPA

Recommendation Information

Recommended By: Derek Nixon
Recommenders Institution: Department of Ecology
Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I choose to waive my right to review this recommendation.
Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓
Received Date: 12/23/2023 11:33 AM
Recommendation Type: General
Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000112297016

Recommenders Title: Auctions & Market Section Manager
Contact Name: Matthew Ragsdale
Recommendation Waiver Choice: I choose to waive my right to review this recommendation.
Recommendation Status: Received
Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant without reservation.
Recommender Form: Letter of Recommendation
Recommendation Owner: Josephine Bernier

Recommender Form Questions

How long have you known applicant:	Applicant ability as self-directed learner:
Time since last contact with applicant:	Applicant as productive member of group:
Relationship with Applicant:	Applicant most significant strengths:
Ability to complete rigorous grad program:	Responsibility/reliability:
Communication Skills - Oral:	Communication skills - written:
Service Orientation-sensitivity/empathy:	Ability to work independently:
Ability to handle stress:	Ability to think critically:
Ability to analyze/problem solve:	Ability to think creatively:
Openness to feedback:	Potential for leadership:
Ability to work in a team:	Personal/professional reflection:

Description Information

Description: Form URL: <https://evergreenstatecollege.radius>

Other Information

Created Time: 11/15/2023 12:03 PM
Modified Time: 01/22/2024 01:44 PM

Created By: Josephine Bernier
Modified By: Shalimar Pedersen

To whom it may concern,

I thought it was likely that soon after I hired Matt, he would (appropriately) apply to a Masters program. Writing this letter is both a joyful reflection on the privilege of working with such a passionate talented person, and a bittersweet reminder that sooner or later Matt will move on to bigger and better things!

Matt is a joy to supervise. If you want to lock in a hardworking passionate graduate student who will bring a new perspective to your classes, I heartily recommend accepting Matt. Matt has:

- real-world policy experience as a significant team contributor to starting a high-profile environmental program (Washington cap-and-invest program) in record time, and
- exceptional social-emotional intelligence with a willingness to step into discomfort, e.g., the time he stood up for a peer who experienced unintentional—but unacceptable—discrimination.

I joined the California Cap-and-Trade program in 2015, where I focused on industrial and electricity decarbonization policy. In my time there—and my two years as the leader of the Cap-and-Invest auctions and market team for Washington State—I have had the opportunity to see unsung public servants make significant contributions to highly visible policies. Matt is such a public servant.

Matt joined the Washington State [Cap-and-Invest Program](#) in July 2022 in the team I supervise: the [auctions and market team \(market team\)](#).¹ At the time, he was one of just fifteen people at the time (now there are thirty) tasked with developing the second ever U.S. economy-wide carbon program. The prior program—California’s—started in 2011 with four years to develop. We had [less than two](#).

Our Program’s startup culture requires significant contributions from each staff member. Matt is no exception, and continually overdelivers, especially when you consider where he is in his career. The probability of impactful mistakes would have increased substantially without him. On any given day:

- He works with other subnational jurisdictions (California and Quebec) solving joint software challenges... and developing goodwill and deepening positive relationships and trust,
- He works with companies covered by the Program gaining experience with stakeholders, and
- He contributes to running our team’s allowance auctions that have delivered over 1.8 billion and counting intended for [programs to improve Washington](#).

At any given moment he is also assigned myriad one-off or reoccurring tasks, notably including:

- Providing some of the initial research that fed into the [Director’s linkage decision](#).
- Developing a roadmap that translated our cap-and-invest rule ([WAC 173-446](#)) into how the auctions and market team would actually register entities and start the first auction;

It’s one thing to volunteer or work in an NGO advocating for a policy, and it’s another thing to be a hand-on policy practitioner, even getting facetime and being present for a few briefings with senior leadership on strategic decisions. Matt is such a candidate. I’m available to answer any follow up questions. I hope you also strongly consider him for funding opportunities—and if they would require additional conversations, I’d be happy to have them.

Best,

Derek Nixon

Auctions and Market Supervisor, Cap-and-Invest Program, Department of Ecology
360-460-2868 (personal)

¹ The Cap-and-Invest program consists of three teams that work together to operate the program: Matt’s team that I lead—the auctions and market team—with a mixture of implementation and policy work; a team focused on sector-specific topics (e.g., offsets and industrial decarbonization); and an emissions reporting team.