



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

TO: Assembly Committee on Tourism

FROM: Senator Howard Marklein and Representative Lee Nerison

DATE: January 10, 2018

RE: Assembly Bill 795 (Senate Bill 650, companion)

Chairperson Tranel and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for having a hearing today on Assembly Bill 795 (AB 795) which was drafted at the request of the members of the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission (WIMRPC). This bill adds representation from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to the Technical Committee of the WIMRPC; it is supported by the affected agencies with no anticipated fiscal impact.

We, along with our colleagues Senator Kathleen Vinehout and Representative Jill Billings, have been appointed by Governor Walker to serve as Commissioners of the WIMRPC. Governed under s. 14.85, the WIMRPC is made up of volunteer representatives from communities along the Wisconsin Great River Road, legislators, state agencies and other related organizations.

The WIMRPC oversees the Wisconsin section of the National Great River Road. The National Great River Road is managed by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC). The MRPC is a multi-state organization that works collectively to preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Mississippi River.

Current law authorizes the WIMRPC to establish a Technical Committee to advise the commission. This committee includes representatives of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Tourism. Many functions of the WIMRPC rely on state agencies and other public entities for collaboration, partnerships, promotion and other initiatives.

We encourage you to support AB 795 as the addition of WEDC and DATCP to the Technical Committee will enhance the WIMRPC's ability to meet its goals as the committee provides a vital connection between the Commission and state agencies.



Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission



January 10, 2018

Senate Bill 650

Membership of Mississippi River Parkway Commission – Technical Committee

Provided by: Sherry Quamme, Chairperson
WI Mississippi River Parkway Commission
PO Box 171
De Soto, WI 54624

Thank you to Senators Marklein and Vinehout who have introduced this Bill and cosponsors Representatives Nerison, Billings, Berceau, Brooks, Considine, Petryk, VanderMeer and Ripp for the support and collaboration to modifying the membership of the WIMRPC Technical Committee as documented in SS14.85.

This change updates State Statute 14.85 to now officially include: Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. Through State reorganizations that occurred in past years, these agencies have new designations so were no longer correctly represented in SS 14.85. Both of these agencies assist the WIMRPC and the advantage of having them officially identified as Technical Committee Members strengthens the relationship and productivity.

State Highway 35 is Wisconsin's Great River Road National Scenic Byway and is Wisconsin's ONLY National Scenic Byway. The mission of the WI Mississippi River Parkway Commission is to preserve, protect, promote and enhance the WI Great River Road National Scenic Byway. Marketing and Promotion make up a major part of the work done by the Commission. Advocacy about the Intrinsic Qualities of the 250 mile WI GRRNSB to protect this asset is paramount. We are part of the 10 State MRPC organization that promotes the entire length of the GRRNSB from Lake Itasca, MN to the Gulf of Mexico and we continue to see annual growth in direct visitor spending as a result of the Wisconsin marketing done in collaboration with the Dept. of Tourism, all 8 counties and the National MRPC as well.

The WIMRPC has 12 Commissioners – one from each of the WI GRR Counties. The County Commissioners are gubernatorial appointees and the Legislative members are appointed by their respective leadership. This is a very active Commission and our scope of work today includes marketing and promotion as well as updating our Corridor Management Plan. To do this, we utilize the skills and involvement of Dept. of Tourism, Dept. of Transportation, DNR and need the assistance of Dept. of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection, WI Economic Development Corp. AB 795 defines the role and relationship for these two agencies as partners with us to build the tourism economy of the

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Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission



Mississippi River Coast of Wisconsin and help the 8 involved counties, several of which are toward the bottom of the WI economic strength scale. AgriTourism is an evolving and growing segment of new adventures and experiences. To promote this in a strong and positive way, DACP is needed as a collaboration with WIMRPC and Dept. of Tourism. WEDC provides us with current information on grants, economic trends plus makes us aware of new opportunities. These are resources the WIMRPC would not have access to unless they have a connection with us.

Thank you

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