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## MENU

**PORTS & TERMINALS**

## Northern Grain Belt Port District Submits Consolidation Request

JULY 8, 2022 • BY DAVID MURRAY

A group of 11 Mississippi River counties and localities in Wisconsin and Minnesota have submitted their request to Col. Karl Jansen, commander of the St. Paul Engineer District, to be consolidated into a single statistical port district for purposes of reporting of cargo and tonnage reporting, to be called the Northern Grain Belt Statistical Port District. The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) cosponsored the application, serving as the nonfederal sponsor.

All the counties have passed resolutions supporting the boundaries of the new district, if it is approved. The application has also received strong support from both states. Such a designation doesn't change anything physically, but gives a better, more complete picture of a region that includes river terminals.

The letter points out that the bi-state section of the Upper Mississippi River has been a functioning regional port system for more than 100 years without federal recognition, and that Wisconsin is the only state on the Mississippi River without a federally recognized port. "The Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area initiative corrects that."

The requested Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area includes the seven riverfront counties of the MRRPC as well as four riverfront counties in Minnesota. The concept is similar to the recently created statistical port districts of the Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI) and the Illinois Waterways Ports and Terminals.

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The MRRPC, created in 1964, is the regional planning organization serving western Wisconsin, providing planning and technical assistance to local governments. The seven Mississippi River waterfront counties it serves are Buffalo, Crawford, LaCrosse, Pepin, Pierce, Trempeleau and Vernon counties.

The letter was signed by Dave Bonifas, director of the MRRPC.



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