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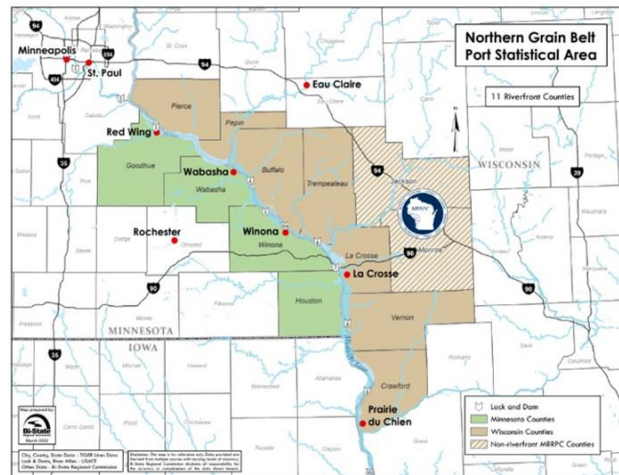
July 6, 2022

Colonel Karl Jansen
 Commander
 St. Paul District
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 180 5th St. E., Suite 700
 St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Colonel Jansen,

I am writing to express my strong support for the non-federal, bi-state Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission’s (MRRPC) application to establish the Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area (PSA). The proposed PSA will consist of seven counties in Wisconsin and four counties in Minnesota. Establishment of this PSA would aid in collecting consolidated data regarding waterway freight terminal volumes and vessel activities, inform regional multi-modal transportation planning, and support the vision of Wisconsin’s *State Freight Plan*.

The Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area has been functioning for over 200 years as a port region, but it does not have federal recognition like many other significant areas on the inland waterway navigation system, such as the Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois PSA, the Illinois Waterway Ports and Terminals PSA, and the Mid-America Port Commission PSA, each of which has been federally recognized in recent years. Lack of a defined PSA denies the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the MRRPC, and riverfront counties from getting annual access to tailored and packaged statistical data and information that would help ensure the region maintains a nationally and globally competitive multi-modal transportation system, a strong regional economy, and sustainable water resources infrastructure that supports both people and the environment.



In summary, I strongly support this application and the ongoing collaboration on both sides of the river to identify strategies for boosting economic development through freight movement.

Sincerely,

Craig Thompson
 Secretary