



Northern Grain Belt Ports is now Federally Recognized

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Media Contact

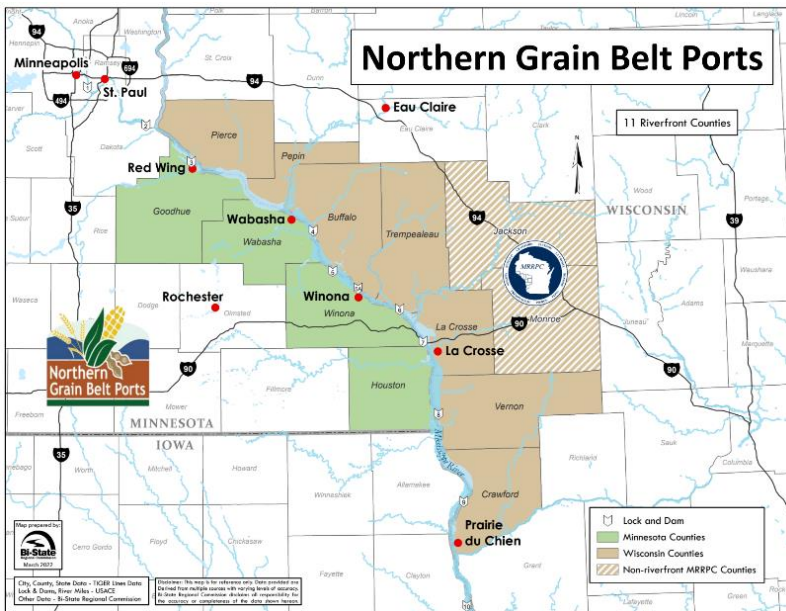
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LA CROSSE, Wis., January 4, 2023 — The Waterborne Commerce Statistic Center approved, on 8 December 2022, the Northern Grain Belt Ports (NGBP) (WI & MN) application to be federally recognized as a Port Statistical Area. The NGBP approval to be listed as a U.S. Principal Port further demonstrates the economic value (value of waterborne commerce) to the nation and the world generated by the bi-state area (Wisconsin and Minnesota) above Locks and Dam 10 on the Mississippi River. It is anticipated that the NGBP will be listed each year as a top 100 U.S. Port (based on tonnage handled). It will be similar in ranking as the Port of Miami. The NGBP is the 4th and final regional port to be added to the Corn Belt Ports, the regional ports within the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway lock and dam system.

The NGBP consists of 7 riverfront counties in WI (Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau, La Crosse, Vernon and Crawford) and 4 in MN (Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona and Houston), see the map. The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) submitted the application in June of this year. The application included resolutions supporting the application from all 11 counties and letters of support from the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, the La Crosse Joint Board of Harbor Commissioners, the city of Prairie du Chien, the Red Wing Port Authority, the City of Wabasha, the Winona Port Authority, a Joint Letter of Support from 13 Minnesota and Wisconsin agriculture organizations, the Secretary of the WI Department of Transportation and the Commissioner of the MN Department of Transportation.



Bob Gollnik, MRRPC lead planner for this effort stated that “the initial endorsement and support provided by the La Crosse Joint Board of Harbor Commissioners helped to reinforce the importance of this effort. Their acknowledgement that not all tonnage reported in Minnesota and Wisconsin is attributed to a federally recognized port, underrepresented the value of waterborne commerce to the region. It does not represent the value of the region to our national and global supply chains.”

“The approval of the NGBP will help to further demonstrate the economic value of the region and the importance of the bi-state waterborne commerce to the regional, national and global supply chains. We believe that it will create

opportunities for direct and indirect investment into the region’s multi-modal transportation and natural infrastructure.” said Peter Fletcher, Executive Director, La Crosse Area Planning Committee

“Federal approval of the NGBP application directly supports our goal to increase investment in our aging multi-modal transportation infrastructure to further increase regional profitability and market development.” said Nicole Wagner, Executive Director, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association.



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“The approval of the NGBP helps to raise the bi-state region’s profile to improve regional, national and global visibility and competitiveness which provides a competitive edge to attract a wide range of public and private investment. Ultimately this promotes opportunities for Minnesota’s 24,000 corn farmers while building connections with the non-farming public.” said Adam Birr, Executive Director, Minnesota Corn Growers Association.

The Secretary of Transportation for Wisconsin, the Honorable Craig Thompson, stated in his letter of support for the NGBP application that “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 [Upper] Mississippi River Ports [Illinois and Iowa] 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.”

The Secretary for Transportation for Minnesota, the Honorable Nancy Daubenberger, stated in her letter of support for the NGBP application that “The Northern Grain Belt PSA has been functioning for over 200-years as a port region but does not have federal recognition like many other significant areas on the inland waterway navigation system. 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 have been federally recognized in recent years. The Northern Grain Belt PSA recognition will help raise the profile of this area, make it more competitive and serve as a valuable economic development tool for the region.”

The Minnesota and Wisconsin agriculture organizations (Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, Midwest Food Products Association, Midwest-SouthEastern Equipment Dealers Association, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, Minnesota Farmers Union, Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, Wisconsin Agri-Business Association, Wisconsin Association of Professional Agriculture Consultants, Wisconsin Biofuels Association, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, Wisconsin Soybean Association) in a jointly signed letter of support for the approval of the NGBP stated; “This bi-state section of the Upper Mississippi River has been a functioning regional port system for over 100 years without federal recognition. Wisconsin is currently the only state on the Mississippi River without a federally recognized port. It is also difficult to determine what waterborne commerce activity is taking place in Western Wisconsin and Eastern Minnesota to support bi-state, regional economic development, and transportation planning efforts. The Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area initiative corrects that.”