

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN THE  
LA CROSSE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND  
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into between the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce and the Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce, collectively "Parties," outlines relevant facts, and collective goals of the Parties to assist in the development of collaborative relations to work jointly to establish a governance arrangement for Wisconsin's West Coast, commonly referred to as the Wisconsin Northern Grain Belt Ports.

**I. PURPOSE**

This MOU reiterates relevant fact, to identify shared goals for the region and a desire to establish a governance arrangement for the Wisconsin Northern Grain Belt Ports which could result in increased state, federal, industry, and non-profit investment; economic activity; and job creation.

**II. OBJECTIVE**

It is the goal of this MOU that the Parties, through cooperative efforts and mutually aligned and shared priorities, establish a more aligned working relationship pertaining to the establishment of a governance arrangement for the Wisconsin Northern Grain Belt Ports which leverages the combined technical expertise and personnel resources to support efforts to increase regional, state, federal, industry, and nonprofit investment and the creation of and attraction of new business in our river connected region.

**III. RELEVANT FACTS**

- The 11 counties, 7 (Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau, La Crosse, Vernon and Crawford) in Wisconsin and 4 (Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona and Houston) in Minnesota passed resolutions to create the identity of the Northern Grain Belt Ports Region and Statistical Area,
- The five area ports, including Port of La Crosse (Joint Board of Harbor Commissioners) and Prairie du Chien in Wisconsin, and Winona, Wabasha and Red Wing in Minnesota passed resolutions or provided a letter of support to form the Northern Grain Belt Ports Region,
- The following organizations provided letters of support to create the Northern Grain Belt Region; La Crosse Area Planning Committee, MN Corn Growers Association, Midwest-SouthEastern Equipment Dealers Association, MN AgriGrowth Council, MN Farm Bureau, MN Farmers Union, MN Soybean Growers Association, WI Agri-Business

Association, WI Association of Professional Agriculture Consultants, Midwest Food Products Association, WI Biofuels Association, WI Corn Growers Association, WI Farm Bureau Federation, and WI Soybean Association,

- The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on 30 June 2022 to establish the regional Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area,
- The Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, Navigation and Civil Works Decision Support Center, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved in December of 2022 the application to establish the regional Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area,
- The regional Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area was listed and nationally ranked as a Port Static Area in the “2021 Transportation Facts & Information” document published by the Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, Navigation and Civil Works Decision Support Center, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
- The regional Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area handles nearly 5 million tons of freight annually, which is expected to increase year after year,
- Illinois Waterway Ports Commission, the Mid-America Port Commission, the Upper Mississippi River Ports [IA & IL], and the Northern Grain Belt Ports (collectively the “Corn Belt Ports”) are the federally recognized modern, sustainable, rural, regional, linear, inland ports above Locks and Dam 26 in the heart of the Corn Belt,
- The Lower Mississippi River (the Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission; the Port of South Louisiana; the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans; the St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District; The Plaquemines Port and the Harbor and Terminal District) and Corn Belt Ports Initiative Cooperative Endeavor agreement was signed in September of 2024. It identified goals and activities of mutual interest,
- The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative endorsed the Lower Mississippi River – Corn Belt Ports Initiative Cooperative Endeavor Agreement. This agreement between the five Louisiana lower Mississippi River deep water ports and the Corn Belt Ports identified areas of mutual interest in promoting and growing agricultural exports and trade and reinforced the need to cooperate with each other in that regard,
- The Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area does not have a Wisconsin governance arrangement recognized by the regional stakeholders and the state of Wisconsin to serve as a regional leader to collaboratively identify regional priorities and advocate for those priorities and increased multimodal transportation and natural infrastructure investment for the region,

#### IV. SHARED PRIORITIES

- Serve as regional leaders to support efforts create a governance arrangement for the Wisconsin Northern Grain Belt Ports
- Identify regional leaders to form a steering committee to help shape the organizational governance arrangement structure, vision and focus of the Wisconsin Northern Grain Belt Ports
- Once the Wisconsin Northern Grain Belt Ports governance arrangement is formalized, support their efforts to implement their vision and focus.
- Once the Wisconsin Northern Grain Belt Ports governance arrangement is formalized, support their efforts to identify how to implement the goals and activities identified in the Lower Mississippi River and Corn Belt Ports Initiative Cooperative Endeavor agreement

The Chambers further agree that neither the execution of this agreement nor the participation of a Chamber in this memorandum of understanding (MOU) and our collective efforts to support the creation of a Wisconsin Northern Grain Belt Ports governance arrangement imposes any obligation on either Chamber for financial support or contributions. Moreover, each Chamber's participation and level of participation is entirely voluntary. Neither the execution of this MOU nor the participation of a Chamber in this memorandum of understanding and the Initiative shall impose any obligation on the Chambers for any specific level of activity and confer no right of action by either Chambers for alleged breach of the agreement. Nevertheless, the Chambers further agree that to the extent either of the organizations expend internal resources, devotes personnel time, or expends funds, even if not obligated to do so by this agreement, such expenditures are compliant with state law in that the expected mutual benefits to the Region and the State are commiserate with the resources expected to be expended.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025  
Chamber of Commerce, La Crosse, WI

Signed this 17 day of April, 2025.  
Chamber of Commerce, Prairie du Chien, WI

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Beth Franklin  
Chamber CEO

By: Robert Moses  
Robert Moses  
Chamber President/CEO