

2023 Northern Grain Belt Ports Annual Meeting Recommended Way Forward



2023 Northern Grain Belt Ports Annual Meeting

Thursday, October 5, 2023 at the Radisson Hotel, La Crosse, WI

Purpose: The Northern Grain Belt Ports (NGBP) initial organization meeting was to share information amongst stakeholders, network and help build a common unified vision for the Northern Grain Belt Ports. Participants were asked to provide recommendations on the way forward.

Provided are the comments provided by participants:

Port-related data and maps need to be updated and maintained.

Continue with the information flow.

There are so many grant programs that it is overwhelming. We should bring in past recipients to talk about how they went about getting grants and how they successfully received the funds. There could be folks outside the Corn Belt Ports. Provide opportunities to share success stories and best business practices of regional ports receiving federal/state grants.

Define each agency / invitee (role, responsibility, and expectations). Ask each federal/state agency participating at future NGBP meetings to make the audience aware of their role, responsibility, and expectations from the audience.

A regional committee needs to be formed to oversee and determine steps forward for the NGBP. The committee should consist of one representative from the 11 counties and the 5 ports (Port of La Crosse, Port of Prairie Du Chien, Port Authority of Winona, Wabasha Port Authority and Red Wing Port Authority).

Identify funding sources for the Northern Grain Belt Ports.

Develop a port infrastructure database and calculate value added (value proposition).

Develop NGBP's mission statement and priorities.

Based on priorities, a collective advocacy is required to achieve the objectives of the Northern Grain Belt Ports. Talk more specifically about advocacy issues we can do more to speak together on to achieve changes and improvements for all ports.

Identify NGBP's tasks to become an organization of influence and an economic development enabler. Determine what the ports need to do for continued growth and strong utilization?

Identify shovel ready islands in the region and develop a strategy and plan of action for reusable dredge materials. Eliminate the need to place dredge material on land only to move to a shovel ready island.

Publish / provide a link to reusable sand strategies / authorized use. Has river sand been evaluated for use in fracking?

State action is now required. Counties (7 in WI and 4 in MN) and 5 state ports (Port of La Crosse, Port of Prairie Du Chien, Port Authority of Winona, Wabasha Port Authority and Red Wing Port Authority) identified a need to create the NGBP.

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Draft legislation to create a state level NGBP organization and a bi-state NGBP entity. Clearly a need exists to create a NGBP bi-state level (legislative) entity.

Identify and define responsibilities for a NGBP lead coordinating port.

Define the NGBP mission, key tasks and its role to be a trusted, positive organization of service, influence and change and how it can best work collaboratively with all community stakeholders.

Answer the question: How can the Northern Grain Belt Ports provide regional leadership to help solve long-standing challenges in our region and attract much-needed investment in not only our infrastructure but so much more?

Convene a meeting with MN ports to identify a state sponsor for sub-regional leadership and develop and sponsor legislation, as needed.

Identify actions and activities for the NGBP to advance sustainable economic and environmental objectives and protect the integrity of our part of the global supply chain for future generations.

Create a business or economic development cluster in and around the Northern Grain Belt Ports.

Develop and execute a plan for action and implementation.

