



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

March 25, 2019

Dr. Timothy Gallaudet, Acting Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

RE: Green Bay Ecosystem National Estuarine Research Reserve Site Selection

Dear Dr. Gallaudet:

I am pleased to notify your office of Wisconsin's interest in establishing a National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) in our Green Bay coastal area of Lake Michigan. The Green Bay ecosystem is the largest freshwater estuary in the world, in the largest reservoir of freshwater on the planet, the vitality of which are critical to the current and future prosperity of the city of Green Bay, Door County, and the broader region. We share with the NERR System a vision of creating a "living laboratory" where scientists, educators, and community partners use place-based research to create distinct educational resources, to facilitate local stewardship, and to support the local economic health afforded by our estuarine-based natural resources.

Green Bay itself is a unique body of water, stretching from the tip of Door County to the headwaters of the Fox and Wolf Rivers. The Bay contains some of the most beautiful and extensively used waters within the entire Great Lakes basin, and represents a tremendous asset for the State of Wisconsin and its citizens – for recreation, fishing, transportation and maritime commerce. It is also an intensely interesting system in terms of its underlying dynamics, the understanding of which have applicability across estuarine systems throughout the world. Designation of Green Bay as a National Estuarine Research Reserve would highlight Wisconsin's leadership in applied environmental stewardship and bring much needed attention to the Great Lakes. Wisconsin sits on nearly ~20% of the world's surface freshwater and 90% of the nation's supply that will increasingly become the envy of regions not so blessed. The Green Bay ecosystem supports a robust tourism industry, with Brown and Door Counties alone generating nearly a billion dollars in visitor spending in 2015 alone. The visitor center and outreach activities associated with a Green Bay ecosystem NERR will provide an additional year-round draw for tourists, and a highly visible location for the NERR System. The initiatives and activities led by a Green Bay ecosystem NERR will enhance place-based identity, contributing directly to talent recruitment and retention efforts for skilled millennials who are seeking the quality of life opportunities supported by a healthy natural resource base. Green Bay will, I predict, quickly become a hallmark reserve within the national system, emphasizing our ability to balance natural resource stewardship with sound agricultural practices, progressive urban design, and responsible industry.

The state of Wisconsin formally seeks federal funds, technical assistance and commitment to guide our state through the site selection process. The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, working closely with the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program in the Department of Administration, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and local community partners will serve as the lead agency for establishing a NERR. The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay has and continues to serve as a leader in in research, stewardship, and restoration activities within the Green Bay ecosystem.



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I invite you to visit Wisconsin's Green Bay ecosystem to gain firsthand experience of this internationally important estuarine system. I am confident that NERR designation will increase awareness of the value of this resource to the nation, and foster a sense of immense pride for this natural resource treasure among the citizens of Wisconsin.

I look forward to working with you and your staff on this exciting project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers

Governor of Wisconsin

cc: Wisconsin Congressional Delegation

Gary L. Miller, Chancellor

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay