



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

December 1, 2020

Governor Tony Evers
PO Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Evers,

We hope that you and your family had a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving.

Last week, it was announced that Tourism Secretary-designee Sara Meaney had resigned to take a position outside of state government. Before the pandemic hit, Wisconsin's tourism industry continued to grow to record levels, reaching an economic impact of over \$22 billion.

Unfortunately, things have changed, dramatically. In Wisconsin, tourism has been one of the hardest hit industries by the pandemic. With estimates reaching a potential loss of \$10 billion, tourism in Wisconsin has been ravaged by the fallout from the fight against Covid-19. Businesses have had to close temporarily or permanently. Employees in the hospitality industry have lost their jobs at an alarming rate, making up over 41% of our current unemployed workforce. At the height of the pandemic in April, over 163,000 tourism employees were out of work. While things have gotten better, there continues to be 74,000 less employees in our leisure and hospitality sector this October compared to October of 2019. Many of those jobs will never return.

With this in mind, it is now more important than ever that our next secretary has a strong background in tourism. While a marketing background was useful when things were going well, we need someone with first-hand knowledge of the industry to deal with the challenges ahead. The department will need a strong voice to help guide the expected rebound that we are all hoping for next summer. Families will return when they believe it will be safe. We need someone that can provide that reassurance. Only someone with an extensive understanding of the tourism industry can provide that trusted voice.

While we are sure that you were disappointed when Secretary-designee Meaney announced her departure, many times challenges like these can lead to tremendous opportunity. Appointing a strong, experienced voice for our tourism industry will set Wisconsin on a path to take advantage of the return of restaurant patrons, waterslide enthusiasts, concert goers, and families that have grown to enjoy everything that Wisconsin's tourism industry has had to offer.

We look forward to your appointment.

Sincerely,

Tyler August
State Representative
32nd District

Steve Nass
State Senator
11th District



Jim Steineke
State Representative
5th District



Howard Marklein
State Senator
17th District



Tyler Vorpapel
State Representative
27th District



Kathy Bernier
State Senator
23rd District



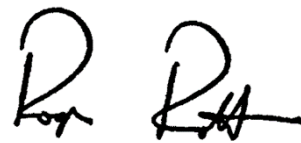
Cindi Duchow
State Representative
99th District



Van Wanggaard
State Senator
21st District



Samantha Kerkman
State Representative
61st District



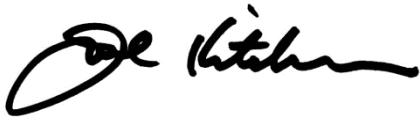
Roger Roth
State Senator
19th District



Rob Swearingen
State Representative
34th District



Shannon Zimmerman
State Representative
30th District



Joel Kitchens
State Representative
1st District



Amy Loudenberg
State Representative
31st District



Dan Knodl
State Representative
24th District



Rob Summerfield
State Representative
67th District



Pat Snyder
State Representative
85th District



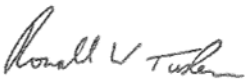
John Spiros
State Representative
86th District



Gary Tauchen
State Representative
6th District



Michael Schraa
State Representative
53rd District



Ron Tusler
State Representative
3rd District



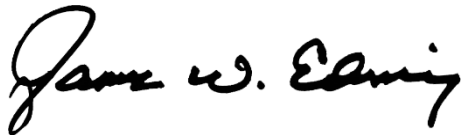
Adam Neylon
State Representative
98th District



Timothy Ramthun
State Representative
59th District



Mary Felzkowski
State Representative
35th District



James Edming
State Representative
87th District



Barbara Dittrich
State Representative
38th District



Rick Gundrum
State Representative
58th District



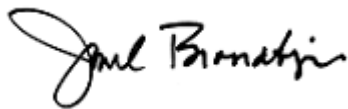
Mike Rohrkaste
State Representative
55th District



Jon Plumer
State Representative
42nd District



Jesse James
State Representative
68th District



Janel Brandtjen
State Representative
22nd District



Joan Ballweg
State Representative
41st District



Robert Wittke
State Representative
62nd District




Gae Magnafici
State Representative
28th District



Jeremy Thiesfeldt
State Representative
52nd District



Paul Tittl
State Representative
25th District



Travis Tranel
State Representative
49th District



Tony Kurtz
State Representative
50th District