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Chairman Tranel and members of the Assembly Committee on Tourism, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on bipartisan Assembly Bill 301.

Tourism is an economic powerhouse in Wisconsin. In 2017, \$13.3B was generated in direct-spending. Brown County has the 5th largest total tourism spending in our state, bringing in \$1.1B in total economic impact from its 5.7M annual visitors. This generates \$43.5M in local taxes, and \$53.6M in state taxes. Tourism in Brown County employs nearly 12,000 people.

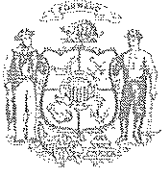
AB 301 provides a \$2M state loan for The Experience Greater Green Bay Visitor Center. Local businesses, individuals, corporations, tribes and others have committed to investing and supporting this \$6.5M+ project. This loan will help finalize funding.

The location for the visitor center will be at the corner of Highway 41 and Lombardi Avenue, which is the ideal location. It will be the first building people see when they get off the highway. The Experience Greater Green Bay Visitor Center will be a place of strong community and state pride by sharing the story of Wisconsin and our region. It will showcase Wisconsin as a great place to live, work, and play.

The goal of the Visitor Center is to expand visitor spending, extend their stay an extra night or two, and encourage repeat visits back to not just Greater Green Bay, but other vacation destinations around Wisconsin as well. In addition, The Greater Green Bay Chamber and other area businesses will partner with the Visitor Center in talent recruitment and workforce development. The Chamber and area and state businesses have an opportunity to showcase Wisconsin to the 5.7M visitors to the area each year.

The State of Wisconsin was a tremendous financial partner with the Wisconsin Discovery Farm Center in Manitowoc. The Department of Transportation has helped fund Wisconsin Welcome Centers in Kenosha, Beloit, La Crosse, and Menominee. Northeast Wisconsin is also a major entry point to the state. This \$2M state loan will help finalize funding for this important project.

Thank you again for holding this hearing on AB 301 and allowing me to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



ANDRÉ JACQUE

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Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Tourism

State Senator André Jacque

June 10, 2021

Chairman Tranel and Members of the Assembly Committee on Tourism,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of AB 301, which will provide the much needed gap financing to ensure construction of The Experience Greater Green Bay Visitor Center in the form of a \$2M state loan. A broad coalition of local leaders have committed to investing and supporting the rest of this over \$6.5 Million project. I was pleased to introduce this proposal with Rep. Tauchen last session and am pleased to support Sen. Wimberger's leadership on it now.

This investment in a "front door" for our entire state's tourism industry is ideally located to be visible and accessible at one of Wisconsin's main visitor entry points to get visitors to do more and see more around our state, and is strongly supported by our state's tourism industry.

I am a proud supporter of the work of the Greater Green Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau, having worked directly with them on several events going back to my service working for the City of Green Bay. I've seen their former location and their temporary one, which are two fantastic arguments for the need of a facility that can fully tap into the potential that the nearly 6 million annual visitors to the Greater Green Bay Area bring, with an economic impact of supported businesses, jobs, state and local taxes that more than justify this investment.

This project has enjoyed strong support from legislators and Governors of both parties. It nearly passed the full legislature last session before COVID hit and I appreciate your consideration in moving it forward now.



STATE SENATOR

Eric Wimberger

DISTRICT 30

Testimony on Assembly Bill 301

Assembly Committee on Tourism

Thursday, June 10, 2021

Chairman Tranel and Members,

Thank you for taking the time to hear testimony on Assembly Bill 301, which would provide an interest-free loan to help construct a new visitor information and education center.

Greater Green Bay serves 5.7 million visitors annually, spending more than \$671 million and delivering an economic impact of more than \$1.1 billion according to a 2017 study conducted by Tourism Economics commissioned by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. In 2017, visitors to the area arrived from all 50 states and 36 countries. Brown County has the fifth highest annual visitor expenditures out of Wisconsin's 72 counties. In 2017, Brown County's tourism industry generated \$94.7 million in local and state taxes. Even a small increase in expenditures encouraged by the operation of a visitor information center will have a substantial impact on tax revenue generated, not only in Northeastern Wisconsin, but throughout the state.

A public/private fundraising partnership for the construction of an Experience Greater Green Bay Visitor Education Center has already raised \$3.5M locally, and is looking to finalize with this additional \$2M from the State. With tourism bouncing back, the Green Bay area would benefit greatly from a new visitors center. Please consider supporting Assembly Bill 301 and helping Northeast Wisconsin prosper.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our testimony this morning.

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