(Organization Letterhead)

(Date)

Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission

56 33rd Avenue South, #283

St. Cloud, MN 56301

Re: Great River Road All-American Road Designation

Dear Sen. Senjem, Chair,

Explore Minnesota Tourism is pleased to provide this letter of support for designation of the Minnesota Great River Road as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. The Great River Road is truly worthy of such designation.

Since 1938 the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission has worked to preserve, promote and enhance the Great River Road National Scenic Byway benefitting communities and travelers along the Mississippi River. The Great River Road meets All-American Road designation criteria, possessing many and varied intrinsic resources that are of national significance. As *the* official access to the Mississippi River through ten states since the time pleasure driving began, the Great River Road is an iconic destination and reason for travel unto itself for many, whether for a few hours or a few months. We applaud that all ten Great River Road states are seeking All-American Road designation from the Federal Highway Administration and we support Minnesota and its nine partner states in this endeavor. All-American Road designation will confirm to all that the Great River Road is a destination not to be missed.

The Great River Road has importance for all communities along the river – from small and rural, to large and metropolitan - as an artery of stewardship, storytelling, tourism and commerce along the Mississippi River benefitting visitors and residents alike. In Minnesota, the Great River Road spans 565 miles, 20 counties, 43 communities and three tribes, guided by a Corridor Management Plan that meets FHWA requirements for All-American Road designation. The byway brings travelers to unique and exceptional landscapes and experiences starting at the iconic headwaters of the Mississippi River.

Explore Minnesota is an active member of the MN-MRPC, was involved in development of the Corridor Management Plan, partners on implementation of that plan and will continue to do so. Examples include serving on the project team for development of the new MN Great River Road website; promoting the Mississippi River and Great River Road via our own website and travel guides; staffing and operation of Welcome Centers; and working with the ten state group of Tourism Offices, Mississippi River Country, to focus on international markets.

Explore Minnesota heartily endorses Minnesota’s efforts, along with its partner states, to have the Great River Road designated as an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration.

Sincerely,