



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER #65**

**Relating to the Creation of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity**

**WHEREAS**, farmers and rural communities are the backbone of Wisconsin, and this state has a proud agricultural history;

**WHEREAS**, agriculture contributes nearly \$105 billion and over 430,000 jobs to Wisconsin's economy;

**WHEREAS**, Wisconsin leads the country in cheese and cranberry production, and is the top exporter of ginseng root, cranberries, and sweet corn;

**WHEREAS**, farmers are facing difficult challenges brought on by a number of factors such as low commodity prices, trade uncertainty, and challenging weather;

**WHEREAS**, farmers are a significant part of our rural communities: they shop and eat at local business, participate in local government, and their children attend local schools;

**WHEREAS**, the challenges facing farmers have had ripple effects across our state;

**WHEREAS**, this administration has taken bold steps to promote rural economic prosperity by making the largest investment in state history in expanding access to broadband internet in underserved communities through the broadband expansion grant program;

**WHEREAS**, this administration continues to support vibrant rural economies by implementing programs that connect farmers with local market opportunities;

**WHEREAS**, this administration is connecting the dots by providing historic investments to support rural infrastructure and building strong partnerships by signing into law initiatives like the Dairy Innovation Hub; and

**WHEREAS**, continuing to partner with and support our farmers and rural communities is vital to the success of the state, and more proactive steps must be taken to support and invigorate the agriculture industry and rural businesses and communities as they face ongoing and developing challenges.

**NOW THEREFORE, I, TONY EVERS**, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this State, including Section 14.019 of the Wisconsin Statutes, hereby create the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity ("Commission") and order the following:

1. The Governor shall appoint the members of the Committee to serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Committee members shall include people representing the interests of the agricultural industry and rural businesses and communities.
2. The Commission shall:
  - a. Hold listening sessions and meetings around Wisconsin to learn about the issues affecting farmers, the agricultural industry, and rural businesses and communities;
  - b. Gather input from stakeholders on current and future challenges facing the agricultural industry and rural businesses and communities, ideas for addressing these challenges, and other means of partnering with and supporting agricultural industry and rural businesses and communities;
  - c. Based on information learned from communities and stakeholders, develop a plan to invigorate the agricultural industry and rural businesses and communities throughout Wisconsin;
  - d. Report to the Governor by December 31, 2020 with the Commission's findings and plan; and
  - e. Provide additional reports and recommendations to at the request of the Governor.
3. The Commission shall be attached to the Department of Administration.

**IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done in the City of Dodgeville this twenty-third day of January in the year of two thousand twenty.

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TONY EVERS  
Governor

By the Governor:

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DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE  
Secretary of State