



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

KATHY BERNIER

February 10, 2016

Assembly Committee on Agriculture

Testimony on Assembly Bill 613

Good afternoon Chairman Nerison and committee members. Thank you for hearing Assembly Bill 613 today and for the opportunity to speak in favor.

The Northern Wisconsin State Fair (NWSF), in cooperation with the City of Chippewa Falls Police and Fire Departments, recognize that a fairgrounds venue is best suited to host large gatherings of people. In order to accommodate events and activities, the Northern Wisconsin State Fair has constructed a seasonal pavilion which will be in use from roughly May – October. Both the fire chief and building inspector were consulted in the planning and design of the facility to ensure the highest level of public safety for a facility of this type. To maximize the pavilion's usefulness, a series of garage-style doors will close to allow for 'off' season use to store picnic tables and other fairgrounds equipment.

After discussions with Northern Wisconsin State Fair Director, Rusty Volk, about a possible variance through DSPS, and potential legislation, we became aware of the Wisconsin Association of Fairs interest in addressing this issue on a state-wide basis, allowing for a similar structures accommodating storage needs and public space while maintaining safety and complying with DSPS standards.

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Assembly Bill 613 accommodates the needs of the Northern Wisconsin State Fair, the Wisconsin Association of Fairs, and the general public by providing changes to the facility structural requirements for storage and public use in seasonal and temporary use buildings.

Thank you for your time and interest in Assembly Bill 613. I'm happy to answer any questions.



TERRY MOULTON



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

23RD SENATE DISTRICT

From: Senator Terry Moulton

To: Committee on Agriculture, Small Business and Tourism

Re: Testimony on Assembly Bill 613
Relating to: requirements for automatic fire suppression systems at certain buildings on fairgrounds

Date: February 10, 2016

Good morning Chairman and members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about Assembly Bill 613 and fire suppression systems in fairgrounds. This bill was brought to my attention by the Northern Wisconsin State Fair Chief Financial Officer, Rusty Volk and the Wisconsin Association of Fairs.

The Northern Wisconsin State Fair (NWSF) is constructing a seasonal pavilion which will be in use from May to October. The facility is designed with garage-style doors that remain open when the facility is in use, making the facility open air, while also providing secure off-season storage. However, after designs for the pavilion were complete and submitted for state approval, NWSF was informed that due to the garage-style doors, the building would be classified by the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) as an A-2 structure, requiring an automatic fire suppression system. Because this pavilion is a seasonal use facility, the A-2 designation is unnecessary and impractical. Installation of an automatic fire suppression system is both cost prohibitive and unsustainable for a pavilion that is open air and used only a few months of the year.

As fairgrounds across the state consider plans for future facilities, Assembly Bill 613 would allow fairgrounds to build facilities that serve both as open air pavilions for seasonal use, as well as secure off season storage. Many fairs across the state are struggling. This legislation will help our fairs to maximize funds as they consider replacing old and outdated buildings. Assembly Bill 613 would change requirements to allow for an exemption from installation of an automatic fire suppression system if a facility is located on a fairground, open to the public only for seasonal or temporary event use for fewer than 500 hours per year, and provides access by garage style doors that remain open when the facility is in use.

Assembly Bill 613 will give Wisconsin fairgrounds more options as they consider future buildings and will help fairgrounds continue to provide events for our communities and families while ensuring patron safety. Thank you for holding today's hearing. Please join me in supporting this legislation.

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