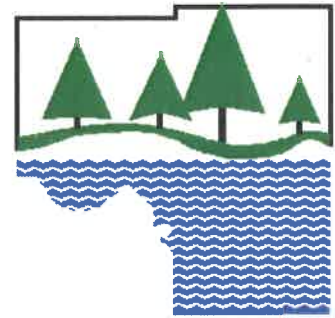


ITASCA COUNTY

Courthouse
Administrative Services
123 NE 4th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-2600
Office (218) 327-7363 Fax (218) 327-2848



September 28, 2021

Congressman Pete Stauber
501 Laurel Street
Brainerd, MN 56401

RE: Letter of Support for Land Exchange between the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bill and Gail Heig (Bowen's Lodge)

Dear Congressman Stauber,

In June of 2021, Bill and Gail Heig acquired approximately 34 acres and 1,100 feet of shoreline on Lake Winnibigoshish adjacent to USFS lands. They will soon be proposing a land exchange with the USFS to acquire their current leased marina located on Big Cutfoot Sioux.

There have been exchange opportunities attempted between Bowen's Lodge and the USFS in the past. In 2013, the Deer River Ranger Station initiated a land exchange process between the Chippewa National Forest and Bowen's Lodge; however, due to continuous leadership staffing changes, the exchange became muddled and was ultimately denied in 2014.

The current Comprehensive Plan established on September 1, 2019 gives guidance to land exchanged within the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) Corridor stating, "to increase public land holdings along the Mississippi River and Headwaters Lakes, MHB member counties should initiate exchanges with private land owners who want to exchange their lands."

The Itasca County Board of Commissioners supports preserving this newly acquired shoreland property on Lake Winnibigoshish, which is currently owned by the Heig Family. It will protect the natural and recreational values of the Mississippi River and will also provide continuity to the existing USFS lands within the area while allowing the Bowen's Resort Property to utilize an existing disturbed marina within the Corridor.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our County Administrator, Brett Skyles, at the number listed above or by email at brett.skyles@co.itasca.mn.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Burl Ives', is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Burl Ives, Chair
Itasca County Board of Commissioners

cc: Anne Marcotte, MHB Chair
Tim Terrill, MHB Executive Director
Michael Stansberry, Chippewa National Forest Supervisor

Equal Opportunity Employer