



## Press Release

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### **Heart of Illinois Regional Port District Convenes 1st Annual Illinois Waterway Ports Commission Meeting in Peoria**

Peoria, Illinois (August 31, 2023)— Today, the Heart of Illinois Regional Port District (HIRPD), serving as the lead coordinating port, hosts the 1st annual Illinois Waterway (ILWW) Ports Commission meeting at the Peoria Riverfront Museum.

This pivotal ILWW Ports meeting, the inaugural gathering since the State's recognition of the Illinois Waterway Ports Commission Act, serves as a venue for stakeholders to exchange information, network, and collaboratively forge a vision for the ILWW Ports. The recently enacted Illinois Waterway Ports Commission Act, a bill initially introduced by state Sen. David Koehler, D-Peoria, signed by the Governor on June 30, 2023, created the Illinois Waterway Ports Commission and gives it jurisdiction over the following counties and port districts: the Seneca Regional Port District; the Ottawa Port District; the Illinois Valley Regional Port District; the Heart of Illinois Regional Port District; the Havana Port District; and Fulton, Mason, Tazewell, Peoria, Woodford, Marshall, Putnam, Bureau, La Salle, and Grundy counties.

Among recent milestones, the ILWW Ports Commission ranks among the top 25 bulk cargo ports in the U.S. and has observed a 13% increase in annual freight tonnage. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has underscored its commitment by investing roughly \$1 million in the development of port master plans within the ILWW Ports Commission area.

Dr. Anshu Singh, Director of Sustainability at HIRPD, stated this morning, "Today's meeting represents a critical juncture for our region. The collaboration and dialogue fostered here will undoubtedly pave the way for continued growth and connectivity across the ILWW Ports."

Sally Hanley, Director of Business Assistance at the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council, a partner of the HIRPD, also reflected on the significance of today's gathering, saying, "By uniting various stakeholders under one roof, we have an unparalleled opportunity to align our strategies, concentrate on core objectives, and progress as a cohesive entity."

#### **About the Heart of Illinois Regional Port District**

*The Heart of Illinois Regional Port District is the lead coordinating port for the newly created Illinois Waterway Ports Commission which is one of the 4 regional multimodal Corn Belt Ports. The federally recognized Illinois Waterway Ports Commission handled 16.5 million tons of freight in the most recent annual report. Collectively, the five-state Corn Belt Ports handled nearly 100 million tons of freight in the last annual report.*

**Press Contact**

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