



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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Dear Dr. Brown, Dr. Hargarten and Ms. Sherman:

Thank you for your letter dated July 3, 2014 that provides your perspectives on the meeting held in my office on June 16th. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss the Statewide Impaired Driving Task Force and impaired driving issues with you.

As indicated in our meeting, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has taken steps to provide for longer term scheduling notifications for Impaired Driving Task Force meetings. Future meetings of the Task Force will help flesh out the signature items, including establishing performance measures and goals. As you know, true progress in any effort to change behavior can take time.

I appreciate your suggestion about reaching out to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to increase collaboration on intoxicated driving programs. Last year WisDOT had discussions with DHS about how to better coordinate the DHS Intoxicated Driver Program (IDP) with WisDOT's Intensive Supervision Program (ISP). WisDOT continues to be interested in cooperating with DHS and other state agency partners to collaborate on issues to prevent impaired driving.

As indicated in our meeting, there are groups that provide advice and counsel to WisDOT on traffic safety issues. One such organization is the Governor's Council on Highway Safety, which is chaired by Dr. Randy Thiel of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Another is the Traffic Safety Council, a multi-disciplinary group of DOT leaders, chaired by Bureau of Traffic Safety Director David Pabst. WisDOT policy

is guided by the involvement of divisions and offices within the WisDOT in a Legislative Committee that is chaired by Assistant Deputy Secretary Tom Rhatican. WisDOT will continue to work with a wide variety of internal and external partners to prevent impaired driving and reduce fatalities, injuries, and crashes. To be clear, the Statewide Impaired Driving Task Force exists to help develop a comprehensive strategy to combat impaired driving as part of Wisconsin's overall traffic safety efforts. It is an advisory group to help WisDOT combat impaired driving and to help write effective and relevant highway safety plans.

It was interesting that you mentioned the activities of the Brown County OWI Task Force in your letter. As you may know, the cooperative enforcement and education activities of the agencies involved in that task force appear to be making a difference. In 2010, the year prior to the start of the Brown County OWI Task Force, there were 29 fatalities, including 11 alcohol-related fatalities in Brown County. In 2013, there were nine traffic fatalities, including six alcohol-related fatalities.

Law enforcement agencies involved in the Brown County OWI Task Force have expressed that they are receiving community support and seeing behavioral changes as a result of their efforts. In addition, alcohol-related fatalities in Wisconsin have declined from 348 in 2003 to 185 in 2013. I reference this data not to indicate that our work is complete – in fact, the opposite is the case. We are encouraged by our efforts to reduce senseless fatalities and injuries on our roadways. WisDOT will continue to focus on data driven approaches and effective countermeasures to drive our fatalities toward Zero in Wisconsin.

Ms. Sherman mentioned age compliance checks in our meeting and it is mentioned in your letter as well. If funding becomes available for such efforts, WisDOT will continue to provide it to local law enforcement agencies as it has in the past.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to meet with you to discuss a variety of issues. As indicated in our meeting, you are welcome to continue participating in discussions to prevent impaired driving and reduce fatalities and injuries in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Gottlieb". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Gottlieb, P.E.
Secretary