



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

March 20, 2017

Ms. Marissa Nicholson
VP Group Show Director
Emerald Expositions
31910 Del Obispo, Suite 200
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Dear Ms. Nicholson:

As you consider a new location to host the annual Outdoor Retailer tradeshow, I want to personally invite you to consider Minnesota as an exciting and hospitable location for your outstanding events. Minnesotans have a strong and passionate commitment to the outdoors. We would warmly welcome you to visit our fine state and see all that we have to offer.

Tourism is a \$14.4 billion industry in Minnesota, generating over 17% of state sales tax and 260,000 leisure and hospitality jobs. Research shows that people travel to our state for a variety of reasons, but the number one area of interest is our great outdoors. Minnesota is known for its lakes, rivers, forest, and prairies and the outdoor recreation that it attracts. As you consider your new venue, here are just a few reasons I believe Minnesota is your best choice.

Minnesota is a national hot-spot for outdoor recreation.

- **10,000 Lakes** – As our license plates note, Minnesota is the “Land of 10,000 lakes.” Water-based recreation is second to none.
- **800,000 Boats** – Minnesota has 800,000 registered boats – the highest per capita proportion in the nation.
- **250,000 Snowmobiles and ATVs** – We also have some 250,000 registered snowmobiles and ATVs.
- **1.5 Million Anglers** – We annually host more than 1.5 million anglers, for species ranging from brown trout to lake sturgeon, monster muskies to jumbo perch, lake trout to catfish.
- **600,000 Hunters** – We have more than 600,000 hunters for species as diverse as deer and grouse, pheasants and ducks, turkeys and elk.
- **1 Million Annual State Park Visitors** – Last year, we hosted in excess of one million visitors to state parks.

- **Countless National Outdoor Events** – Our public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities provide the setting for a number of outdoor events: the Vasaloppet cross country ski race, the John Beargrease sled dog race, Arrowhead 135 Endurance Race, Almanzo 100 gravel bike race, Ruffed Grouse Society annual hunt, Bassmaster’s Championship, Twin Cities and Grandma’s Marathons and many more.

Outdoor recreation is everywhere in Minnesota.

- **75 State Parks and Recreation Areas** – There are 75 State Parks and recreation areas – including the iconic Itasca State Park – which just celebrated its 125th birthday on the headwaters of the Mississippi River, the scenic Splitrock Lighthouse state park on Lake Superior, and the new Cuyuna country state recreation area that is home of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) silver level mountain bike course.
- **1,500 Places to Access Public Waters** – More than 1,500 state public water accesses, thousands of miles of designated canoe and kayak water trail, and the unparalleled Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park.
- **6 Million Acres of Land for Outdoor Recreation** – More than 6 million acres of state-owned land in Minnesota is open to everyone who wants to enjoy camping, hunting, birdwatching and berry gathering.
- **22,000 Miles of Snowmobile Trails** – Some 22,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trail that keeps our citizens outdoors all winter.

The “Twin Cities” of St. Paul and Minneapolis have all the infrastructure to accommodate your event.

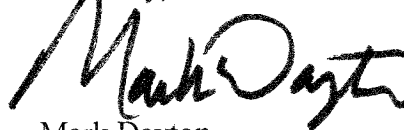
- The Minneapolis Convention Center (MCC) is home to a 3,400 fixed-seat auditorium, 475,000 square feet of exhibit space, 87 meeting rooms and both a 28,000-square-foot ballroom and a 55,000-square-foot ballroom.
- The St. Paul River Centre has fifteen meeting rooms, a 27,000 square foot ballroom and approximately 100,000 square feet of exhibition space. □
- Many thousands of hotel rooms and hundreds of restaurants are found throughout the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul area.
- The Twin Cities has a robust public transportation system including light rail and buses (Uber and Lyft, too!).
- As an indication of the available infrastructure, the Twin Cities will be hosting the 2018 Superbowl, the 2017 and 2018 X Games, and the 2019 NCAA Final Four.

Minnesota is home to many outdoor products manufacturers and retailers.

- We-no-nah and Northstar kayaks and canoes are built only in Minnesota.
- Polaris and Arctic Cat snowmobiles were founded and continue to thrive in northern Minnesota.
- Granite Gear, Cooke Custom Sewing, Frost River and Duluth Pack all manufacture top shelf bags and gear.
- Katadyn North America and Red Wing Shoe produce essential outdoor gear.
- 3M, Clam Outdoors, Stearns, Vexilar are all global leaders in manufacturing fishing gear.
- Lund, Alumacraft, Crestliner powerboats produced in Minnesota are some of the best in the world.
- Hed, Salsa, Surly, 45NRTH bikes and bike products (home of Quality Bike Products) all originate here.
- Retailers abound and thrive, including: REI, Midwest Mountaineering, Cabelas, Scheels, Piragis Northwoods, and many, many more.

In closing, my staff and I would welcome the opportunity to visit with you or submit a more formal proposal. Minnesota is a great state for outdoor recreation, we cherish the public lands that foster that experience, and we would be a great destination for your event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Dayton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Dayton
Governor