Michigan House of Representatives
Tourism, Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources Committee
Representative Joel Sheltrown, Committee Chairman
Tuesday, June 8, 2010 - 10:30 a.m.
521 House Office Building, Lansing

Testimony of Mr. Kelly Dee:

In her presentation, Annie described

- Who is in support of the Regional Convention & Tourism Act – as well as reported - that to the best of our knowledge - there is no opposition to this act.
- She also briefly touched upon what we hope to accomplish and why – My colleague, Mr. Bo Miller, will elaborate further regarding this topic.
- Annie reported that this effort is unanimously desired by the people within Midland County, Bay County and Saginaw County – Michigan's new Great Lakes Bay Region
- And that our goal is to have the new Great Lakes Bay Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau legally established by this year's end.

I address you today as the District Manager of Mid-Michigan Hospitality Management Company. I oversee lodging properties within both Bay and Midland Counties; serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bay City Convention & Visitors Bureau and as a Board Member of the Midland County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Today, I would like to share details regarding the Great Lakes Bay Region's desire to gain your approval of the Regional Convention & Tourism Promotion Act.

- The current assessment law in effect positions both Bay and Midland Counties in an inequitable funding situation as compared to fellow Michigan Convention & Visitor Bureaus. We seek your approval to resolve the inequitable funding scenario and pave the way for regionalization of our Convention & Visitor Bureaus.
- Our effort to correct this situation began in July of 2009 within the

Testimony of Mr. Bo Miller:

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to address you regarding the Regional Convention & Tourism Act. My name is Bo Miller and I serve as Director of Corporate Affairs, Great Lakes Bay Region/State of Michigan for the Dow Chemical Corporation.

Bay, Midland and Saginaw County's Convention & Visitors Bureaus have worked cooperatively over the past 20 years on various efforts. These efforts resulted in successes and were adequate for the time. Today, we realize we have the opportunity to achieve even greater successes by consolidating expenses and driving more dollars into direct marketing efforts. We have developed an approach to allow us to market our Great Lakes Bay Region while maintaining the individuality of each community. We estimate that we will drive an additional half a million dollars into direct marketing efforts in our first full operational year alone with 1/3 being derived from operational savings and 2/3rds originating from assessments.

We, in the Great Lakes Bay Region, realize that by working collectively we strengthen our region, the State of Michigan and advance our quality life. We have a plan that identifies ways each industry segment can compliment the efforts of other industries, build a sustainable system enabling the sharing of resources, eliminate duplication of efforts and maximize opportunities for growth. We are working this plan through the efforts of the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance.

The tourism industry is a major player in this plan. Tourism serves as an important industrial sector employing 10% of our workforce and generating $252 million dollars annually in direct spending within our region alone. Additionally, tourism contributes to economic development. A study conducted on behalf of Michigan's economic development organizations showed that the likelihood of a person locating an organization in an area increases if they have first visited the area as a tourist. This effort is one of our two highest priority efforts as part of this plan and serves an outstanding example of our plan in action. In case you were wondering, our other top priority is the expansion of MBS International Airport