

# Gov. Evers: Wisconsin welcomes donation of Personal Protective Equipment from sister state in China

Posted on Sunday, May 3, 2020

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced Wisconsin has received a donation of 10,000 procedural masks and 1,000 medical outfits from its sister state of Heilongjiang Province to help grow its supply of personal protective equipment (PPE).

“This donation shows teamwork at its finest,” Gov. Evers said. “Our sister state of Heilongjiang, along with several state agencies and Wisconsin higher education and nonprofit institutions, all worked together to bring these supplies here and support our frontline COVID-19 responders in a time of need. I want to thank our friends in Heilongjiang for their support and generosity.”

The state of Wisconsin has enjoyed a sister state relationship with Heilongjiang Province, located in northeast China, since 1982. The 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that relationship was celebrated in 2017 with programming coordinated by Heilongjiang Province in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, the University of Wisconsin System and the U.S. Consulate in Shenyang.

When she heard about the need for PPE for Wisconsin’s COVID-19 response, Carolyn Brady, International Partnership and Outreach Programs Coordinator for UW-River Falls, reached out to the Foreign Affairs Office in Harbin to see if Heilongjiang had any masks available. UW-River Falls has partnered with DATCP on international efforts, including trips to China to promote Wisconsin’s dairy industry, and is currently piloting a Chinese language program for early learners in collaboration with the Heilongjiang Provincial Government and the River Falls School District.

That outreach culminated in the donation of the masks and outfits courtesy of Governor Wang Xiankui of Heilongjiang, with multiple Wisconsin stakeholders helping to bring the shipment to Wisconsin. DATCP assisted in communications with the Heilongjiang contacts; the international team of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. (WEDC) coordinated the shipment out of China with the Heilongjiang Provincial Government; and the Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation nominally received the goods and donated them to the state, eliminating the need for duty payments.

“Our UWRF outreach has not only directly benefited our institution, community and state, but has also produced an abundance of reciprocal goodwill between the people of Wisconsin and the residents of Heilongjiang Province,” Brady said. “This generous gift in response to our need is just one evidence of their warm regard, for which we, and I trust all of the direct recipients, are most grateful.”

“The Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation is honored to be able to play a part in bringing PPE donations to Wisconsin at this crucial time,” said Paul Gabriel, executive director of the Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation. “We appreciate being part of a dedicated and diverse ‘can do’ effort to bring in protective masks and gowns under Governor Evers’ leadership.”

The shipment from Heilongjiang is the latest in a series of PPE donations Wisconsin has received to support its COVID-19 response. Organizations that include the Wisconsin Dental Association, WEC Energy Group, Kohler, Snap-On Tools, Northern States Power Co., ND Paper, the Wisconsin Humane Society, and Foxconn have donated equipment such as masks, gloves, face shields and gowns toward the state supply of PPE.

“Competition for COVID-19 supplies is intense. That is why we are committed to pursuing every avenue – state, national and international – to obtain the resources necessary for our response,” Gov. Evers said. “I want to thank all of our donors who have answered the call to support our front lines in the fight against COVID-19. Donations like these provide our responders with the equipment they need to help keep our communities safe and healthy.”

The state of Wisconsin continues to encourage companies, educational facilities and other organizations that may have PPE supplies and other needed resources that could be used in the state’s response to the COVID-19 emergency to visit its donor/buyback website at <https://covid19supplies.wi.gov/Donations>.