

Rep. Kitchens: Evers, DNR stalling on future of historic tower

Posted on Wednesday, Apr 13, 2022

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MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) has released the following statement regarding the announcement from Gov. Evers and the Department of Natural Resources that they have issued a request for proposal to either repair or replace the observation tower at Potawatomi State Park but will continue to study the different options before making a decision in December:

“The people of Door County will not be fooled by this blatantly deceptive political maneuvering by the Evers administration. It is more than obvious that they are stalling until after the November election so that they do not upset the majority of residents who overwhelmingly support rehabilitating the iconic tower, which is listed on both the State and National Register of Historic Places.

“Due to that designation, the DNR is legally required to submit a plan to preserve the structure. So far, they have ignored that legal obligation. That really comes as no surprise since they have delayed the process numerous times since the tower was closed to the public in 2017. Shortly thereafter, a company known for repairing towers across the world came up with a proposal to restore the Potawatomi structure. For nearly four years the DNR has been studying several different plans and this latest stall tactic is the epitome of willful neglect.

“I also take issue that Gov. Evers is once again blaming the Legislature for the failures of his administration. The DNR is part of the executive branch, meaning they are under the complete control of the governor. If he wanted to, Gov. Evers could order the repair of the tower today. We could also proceed if he allowed the state Building Commission to consider the project. This falls squarely on Gov. Evers' shoulders and he should be held accountable for his conspicuous lack of action.”