http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/sara-meaney-evers-s5.jpg

Top Tourism advocate returns to the private sector after exceptional work ignored by the Republican controlled Senate.

MADISON — On Wednesday, Gov. Tony Evers announced Department of Tourism Secretary-designee Sara Meaney is leaving the Evers Administration. Secretary-designee Meaney will leave her position later this month to take a career opportunity outside of state government after serving in the position for nearly two years.

"Sara has been a relentless advocate for the tourism industry even before the pandemic, but especially as it has faced unprecedented challenges this past year," Gov. Evers said. "Sara has been part of our administration from the very beginning, and we will miss her passion and enthusiasm for travel and all the great things Wisconsin has to offer visitors and folks across our state. I'm incredibly grateful for Sara's support and service these past two years, and I wish her and her family all the best."

Gov. Evers appointed Secretary-designee Meaney in December 2018. She was among the

first appointments announced to the governor's cabinet. Prior to joining the Evers Administration, Secretary-designee Meaney was the chief marketing and development officer for Milwaukee Film, the organization that hosts the annual Milwaukee Film Festival. The Senate Committee on Local Government, Small Business, Tourism, and Workforce Development unanimously recommended Secretary-designee Meaney's confirmation in September 2019.

"Wisconsin is home for my family and me, and it's also an inspiring and beautiful place to explore. I am grateful to Governor Evers for giving me the latitude to set a clear strategic vision, enact transformational change, drive record-setting successes, spur economic growth, and lead the state tourism industry through this pandemic," said Secretary-designee Meaney. "With data, collaboration, and integrity at the forefront, I am immensely proud of the accomplishments achieved through times of shared success and unprecedented challenges."

Tourism Deputy Secretary Anne Sayers will serve as interim department secretary following Secretary-designee Meaney's departure.

"The tourism industry is so grateful for Secretary Meaney's leadership these past two years and for putting us on strong footing to emerge with a competitive edge on the other side of this pandemic," said Deputy Secretary Sayers. "My top priority will be to continue to strategically position Wisconsin tourism to ensure we can bounce back from this tourism recession as quickly as possible."

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Note: Despite 2 years of exceptional work, Meaney's appointment was never approved by the full Senate. She joins Department of Health Services Secretary Andrea Palm, Department of Transportation Secretary Craig Thompson and Safety and Professional Services Secretary Dawn Crim, who have yet to receive a confirmation vote from the Republican controlled Senate.