



U.S Department
of Transportation



Saint Lawrence
Seaway Development
Corporation

**MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SEAWAY OPENS 58th NAVIGATION SEASON ICE FREE
“Clear Sailing Ahead” as Seaway Opens Two Weeks Earlier**

Washington, DC (March 21, 2016) – The U.S. and Canadian Seaway Corporations marked the opening of the Seaway’s 58th navigation season today, with the transit of Canada Steamship Lines’ *Thunder Bay* through Lock 3 on the Welland Canal. The ship, carrying a load of road salt, will be replenishing stocks depleted by ice storms which repeatedly struck Eastern Canada over the winter.

“The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System continues to be an environmentally sustainable, vital route for commerce in the global supply chain,” said Betty Sutton, Administrator of the U.S. Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC). “The Great Lakes region, North America’s ‘Opportunity Belt’ is a thriving and influential destination and the Seaway System connects this region to the world. Businesses are choosing to move their cargo through the Seaway System because of the economic benefits, safety, and reliability of our waterway, and its direct access to the heartland of North America.”

“We certainly welcome the warmer weather. A return to an opening in the third week of March provides our clients with the opportunity to move cargo in a timely manner, and make the most of the navigation season,” said Terence Bowles, President and CEO of The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation (SLSMC).

Allister Paterson, President of Canada Steamship Lines (CSL), served as the keynote speaker at the opening. “It’s an honor for CSL to be opening the Seaway this year with *Thunder Bay*, one of our state-of-the-art Trillium Class self-unloading Lakers. Like her five sister ships, this vessel is part of a new generation of vessels in the Lakes that are more energy efficient, environmentally-friendly, reliable and safe,” said Paterson.

“The ongoing investment in new vessels by a variety of Seaway carriers underscores our customers’ faith in the future of the waterway,” said the SLSMC’s Bowles. “In parallel with our customers’ investments, the Seaway’s award winning modernization program is now well-over 50 percent complete, with Hands-Free Mooring operational at eight of the Seaway’s locks. We are making steady progress in bringing about gains in efficiency and safety for all concerned, ensuring a highly competitive transportation system for years to come.”

K+S Windsor Salt ships the majority of the production coming from its Ojibway Mine in Windsor via the Great Lakes/Seaway System. Francois Allard, Director Marine Distribution for K + S Windsor Salt Ltd., said, “Not only is the Seaway transportation system the most cost-effective way to reach our markets, it also minimizes our impact on the environment. The *Thunder Bay*’s transit from the Ojibway mine to Bowmanville takes almost 1,000 truckloads off Ontario highways. It’s important that all levels of government continue to invest in infrastructure along this waterway and we applaud the modernization of the lock system.”

In terms of the outlook for 2016, the SLSMC's Terence Bowles noted that a lower Canadian dollar may spur more Canadian exports this year. "The combination of a rebound in Canadian manufacturing activity, a solid U.S. economy, and the prospect of more trade with Europe brings about several catalysts which may boost Seaway tonnage," said Bowles.

Over 227,000 jobs and \$35 billion in economic activity are supported by the movement of various cargoes on the Great Lakes Seaway System. For more information on the St. Lawrence Seaway, please consult the www.greatlakes-seaway.com website.

About the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC):

The SLSDC is a wholly owned government corporation created by statute to construct, operate and maintain that part of the St. Lawrence Seaway between the Port of Montreal and Lake Erie, within the territorial limits of the United States. Its mission is to serve the U.S. intermodal and international transportation system by improving the operation and maintenance of a safe, reliable, efficient, and environmentally responsible deep-draft waterway, in cooperation with its Canadian counterpart. The SLSDC also encourages the development of trade through the Great Lakes-Seaway System, which contributes to the comprehensive economic and environmental development of the entire Great Lakes region.

- 30 -

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