



U.S. Department
of Transportation

THE ADMINISTRATOR



Saint Lawrence
Seaway Development
Corporation

April 4, 2008

Muskegon Chronicle
Mr. Paul Keep, Editor
981 3rd Street
Muskegon, MI 49440-1236

Dear Mr. Keep:

I was quite disappointed in your newspaper's article, "Study: Great Lakes Salties Ban May Create Jobs," dated March 25, 2008. The article suggests that "banning" ocean-going ships in the Saint Lawrence Seaway is a matter of "debate," as if closure is even in the realm of possibility. It most definitely is not, and to suggest otherwise is foolish and uninformed.

The Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, signed and ratified by the governments of Canada and the United States, guarantees that all domestic and international vessels shall have free and open access to the Seaway and the Great Lakes, in perpetuity. As I noted to your reporter--although he declined to explain it in the article--this treaty makes any "debate" about closing the Seaway moot and pointless. Your readers deserve better information regarding the status of the Seaway as an internationally protected waterway. If professors want to engage in hypothetical cost benefit analyses regarding closure, that is their prerogative, but those of us responsible for managing the Seaway have to live in the real world, which means devising solutions to protect the Great Lakes while honoring our legal obligations to our Canadian and international trading partners.

That is exactly what we are doing. This year, all ships entering the Seaway will be required to flush their ballast tanks with full strength sea water. Sea water has been scientifically proven to be a highly effective biocide against potential invasive species. All ships are inspected in Montreal for compliance by the Seaway Corporations, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Transport Canada. This helps to assure that ships are free of potential invasives *before* they enter the Great Lakes.

The Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation will continue to live up to its obligation for responsible management of this important asset. It is up to the media to live up to its obligation to engage in responsible reporting.

Respectfully,

Collister ("Terry") Johnson, Jr.