

**Administrator Betty Sutton
Remarks for
Great Lakes Waterways Conference
February 10, 2015
Cleveland, Ohio**

- Thank you, Dave. And thank you to all the individuals who have worked hard to coordinate this event. We appreciate your efforts.
- I also want to acknowledge my esteemed colleagues who join me today on this panel of maritime industry and government leaders.
- I am excited to be here in Cleveland with such a large representation of Great Lakes maritime stakeholders who have come together for the annual Waterways Conference.
- It is great to see you all here in one place and I hope to have the opportunity to visit with as many of you as possible.

- Big things are happening at the Seaway and I'll touch on some highlights for you as much as I can in my allotted time.
- The Great Lakes Seaway System offers geographic and natural advantages uniquely suited for maritime transportation. I know from your presence here that you already know that, but this remains an essential message to deliver in the United States, Canada, and abroad.
- Our marine highway is more relevant today than ever.
- Our message is clear - maritime transportation is the most fuel-efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally-friendly way to move goods to and from the heartland of North America.
- And I am happy to report that we saw that reflected in a highly successful Seaway navigation season last year.
- The Seaway System realized a 7 percent tonnage increase from 2013 to 2014. It's the first time since the 2008 navigation season that we've hit the 40 million metric ton mark.

- That strong post-recession rebound was due in large part to increased shipments of our core commodities - grain as well as iron and steel products - as well as large volumes of road salt necessary to replenish inventories that were very low after last winter.
- Dozens of cities and towns across the Great Lakes region depend on the Seaway to provide road salt, keeping streets safer in hazardous winter weather and permitting people access to their jobs and schools.
- The way **this** winter is going, perhaps salt will continue to play a starring role in the tonnage figures again in the 2015 season!
- To further highlight a successful season, we saw more ocean vessels transiting the Seaway System this past year than we have in recent history.
- There were 158 more ‘salties’ trading in the System in 2014 – a strong 22 percent increase over 2013.
- With a slow start to the 2014 season, each month from May through December showed an increase in tonnage compared to the 2012 to 2014 three-year monthly average.

- The strong finish to the Seaway's 2014 navigation season contributed to the resurgence in the overall economy and foreshadows a positive outlook for increasing use of maritime transportation to move goods throughout the region.
- As maritime stakeholders, our shared commitment to increasing trade on the Great Lakes Saint Lawrence Seaway System helps support the growing import and export trends we are realizing.
- I am encouraged by these very positive results and aim to further expand the reach and role of the SLSDC across the Great Lakes region, which I like to call, North America's "Opportunity Belt".
- The "Opportunity Belt" moniker compliments our shared vision of the Seaway System as a marine highway.
- The waterway provides global access to the cities, states, and provinces in the heartland of North America, where opportunities abound.

- Over the past year and a half, I have sought to communicate as widely as possible that while the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation does an excellent job of safely, efficiently and reliably operating our locks and maintaining the infrastructure, we also do more.
- We have a trade and economic development mission.
- Helping the Great Lakes Region - our cities, states, and provinces realize further economic growth and productivity via our binational waterway is the overarching point.
- To that end, I am pleased to announce that the SLSDC has just launched a new Great Lakes Regional Outreach Initiative.
- This initiative will support and encourage greater economic development opportunities for the people and businesses throughout the Opportunity Belt that utilize, or could utilize, maritime transportation on the Great Lakes Saint Lawrence Seaway System.
- To enhance the SLSDC's trade and economic development mission, a full-time Great Lakes Regional Representative will be providing on-the-

ground assistance to the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System stakeholder community.

- Adam Schlicht, a member of the SLSDC staff for the past five years, will lead this new initiative as the Great Lakes Regional Economic Development Representative, coordinating closely with governmental, nongovernmental, and industry stakeholders across the region.
- This focused outreach program will include working with and supporting Great Lakes/Seaway ports, terminals, shippers, carriers, and labor to increase maritime trade.
- It will involve meeting with federal, state and local elected officials to offer our assistance.
- It will include coordination with other regional Federal entities, Great Lakes state transportation officials, and regional economic development agencies to ensure Seaway System maritime transportation is understood and prioritized in regional planning.

- It will be a resource to provide information about federal maritime transportation and funding assistance programs.
- Our Great Lakes Regional Economic Development Representative will also be responsible for leading future SLSDC regional activities and programs that directly assist Great Lakes ports, businesses, the public and other stakeholders.
- The SLSDC Regional initiative will greatly complement the SLSDC's existing economic development and policy work in Washington DC as well as our lock operations and marine services in Massena, NY.
- It will also enhance our joint trade development and marketing efforts with the Canadian Saint Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation through the binational Highway H20 program.
- Highway H20 is the path, the Opportunity Belt, with all it has to offer, is the destination.
- This is an exciting and dynamic time for the Seaway System and the Great Lakes region and the absolute

right time to bring a new focus to our economic development role.

- Frankly, the Seaway exists for economic activity in the region, connecting North America's 'Opportunity Belt' to the world.
- It is critical that we have a direct presence in the region.
- I am confident this approach to trade and economic development will advance the SLSDC's efforts to effectively support the Great Lakes region, increase commercial trade through the waterway, and provide increased tangible benefits for the economies of both the United States and Canada.
- The SLSDC, together with the Canadian Seaway, is fully committed to realizing the potential of our binational waterway.
- I look forward to productive discussions today and tomorrow and know there will be a tremendous amount of invaluable information exchanged during the conference.
- Thank you.