



Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

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Ice Blockade Halves U.S.-Flag Lakes Shipping in March

CLEVELAND—Ice formations, the likes of which have not been seen in decades, severely limited cargo movement in U.S.-flag vessels on the Great Lakes in March. Shipments of iron ore, coal and cement in “lakers” totaled 980,000 tons, a decrease of 55 percent compared to a year ago. Some of the cargo that was loaded in March was not delivered until April 7 or later.

Iron ore cargos totaled 827,000 tons, a decrease of 47 percent compared to a year ago. Most of the ore was loaded at Escanaba, Michigan, or shuttled within Cleveland Harbor. Only 67,000 tons were loaded at a Lake Superior port, and the ice formations on Lake Superior and the St. Marys River were so thick that those cargos were not delivered until April 7 or later. Under normal circumstances those cargos should have been delivered in late March or early April.

Resumption of the coal trade was likewise slowed by winter's grip on the Lakes. Shipments totaled 103,000 tons, a decrease of 44.5 percent compared to a year ago.

The only other dry-bulk cargo to move in March was cement and shipments fell to 52,000 tons, a decrease of 67 percent compared to a year ago.

Through March 31, U.S.-flag cargos total 3.2 million tons, a decrease of nearly 39 percent compared to the same point in 2013.

The extreme ice conditions will have an impact on cargo movement in April as well. As of April 1, only 23 U.S.-flag lakers were in service. A year earlier 38 vessels were in operation. Forty U.S.-flag lakers were moving on April 1, 2012.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 17 American companies that operate 57 U.S.-flag vessels on the Great Lakes that carry the raw materials that drive the nation's economy: iron ore and fluxstone for the steel industry, aggregate and cement for the construction industry, coal for power generation, as well as salt, sand and grain. Collectively, these vessels can transport more than 115 million tons of cargo per year.

More information is available at www.lcaships.com. Contact: Glen G. Nekvasil, Vice President (440-333-9996).

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Information based on data from knowledgeable sources. However, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Lake Carriers' Association assumes no legal responsibility for the outcome of decisions or commitments made on the basis of this information. This report represents the views of Lake Carriers' Association and may not necessarily represent the views of its individual members.

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