



Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

May 9, 2014

Lakes' Ice Halves Ore Trade in April

CLEVELAND—Heavy ice formations on the Great Lakes continued to slash iron ore shipments in April. Shipments totaled only 2.7 million tons, a decrease of 52 percent compared to a year ago. Loadings slumped even more – 53.3 percent – when compared to the month's long-term average.

Lake Superior's ice was so challenging that the U.S. and Canadian Coast Guards had to convoy freighters the entire month. In fact, it was not until May 2 that the U.S. Coast Guard allowed vessels to proceed across Lake Superior unescorted.

The ice field off Marquette, Michigan, barred lakers from loading at the port until April 13.

Another ice-related factor in the decrease was the inability of downbound freighters to transit the Rock Cut, a stretch of the St. Marys River just below the Soo Locks. The Rock Cut was clogged with ice, so vessels had to use the upbound track and this reduced their loaded draft. As a result, even the largest iron ore cargo loaded on Lake Superior in April was less than 60,000 tons. If the largest vessels had been able to transit the Rock Cut, loads would have been 65,000 tons or more.

Through April, the Lakes iron ore trade stands at 6.2 million tons, a decrease of nearly 43 percent compared to both a year ago and the long-term average for the January-April timeframe.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 17 American companies that operate 57 U.S.-flag vessels on the Great Lakes and 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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The Association Representing Operators of U.S.-Flag Vessels on the Great Lakes

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