



Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

April 10, 2015

Fleet Pays High Price for Thick Lakes Ice

More Icebreakers Needed to Meet Needs of Commerce

CLEVELAND — Cargo movement in U.S.-flag Great Lakes freighters (lakers) in March fell to its lowest level since 2009. Shipments totaled only 825,000 tons, a decrease of more than 60 percent compared to the month's 5-year average. Another brutal winter, coupled with a number of casualties to U.S. and Canadian icebreakers, slowed the resumption of navigation.

A number of vessels delayed their fit-out because of the heavy ice. Only 26 U.S.-flag lakers were in service on April 1. In some years, nearly 50 hulls are underway by that date.

Iron ore felt the brunt of the delays. Loadings totaled just 535,000 tons, a decrease of 66 percent compared to the month's 5-year average.

This is the second year in a row a harsh winter has stalled the new shipping season. Lake Carriers' Association has called on the U.S. government to build another heavy icebreaker to pair with the MACKINAW and assign another 140-foot-long icebreaking tug to the Lakes while the 140s already stationed here are rotated to the Coast Guard yard in Baltimore for service life extension.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 16 American companies that operate 56 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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