



Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

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April Ice Not Nice to Lakes Ore Trade

CLEVELAND — Shipments of iron ore on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway totaled 4.3 million tons in April, nearly 15 percent below the month's long-term average. The heavy ice blanketing the Lakes not only slowed the vessels that were in service, it delayed many vessels from sailing. Several U.S.-flag vessel operators held back ships rather than sit in ice because the U.S. and Canadian Coast Guards do not have enough icebreakers to adequately cover the system.

"April was again proof positive that we need more icebreaking resources," said James H.I. Weakley, President of Lake Carriers' Association, the trade association representing U.S.-flag vessel operators on the Great Lakes. "Even though domestic steel production has been slowed by dumped foreign steel and global overcapacity, the mills and power plants needed to be resupplied after the winter closure. Unfortunately, extreme ice conditions, especially in Whitefish Bay at the eastern end of Lake Superior, forced many vessels to wait until convoys could be formed and led through the ice fields."

This is the second year in a row a brutal winter has slowed early season shipments of iron ore and other cargos on the Lakes. As a result, Rep. Candice Miller (R-MI) included a provision in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 (H.R. 1987) approved by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee that directs the U.S. Coast Guard to design and build a new, multi-mission icebreaker to enhance its capabilities on the Great Lakes. "We thank Congresswoman Miller for recognizing the need for more U.S. Coast Guard icebreakers on the Great Lakes. This new icebreaker must be at least equal to the heavy icebreaking capabilities of the MACKINAW. We will be working with the entire Great Lakes delegation to ensure this provision remains in the final bill passed by the House and Senate."

Through April, the Lakes/Seaway ore trade stands at 8.2 million tons, a decrease of 16.5 percent compared to the long-term average. Loadings out of U.S. ports on Lake Superior and Lake Michigan are down more than 21 percent compared to their long-term average.

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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