

Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

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U.S.-Flag Cargo Movement on the Great Lakes Down 34 Percent in March

CLEVELAND — U.S.-flag Great Lakes freighters (“lakers”) carried 1.2 million tons of cargo in March, a decrease of nearly 34 percent compared to a year ago. March’s float was also 19.7 percent below the month’s 5-year average. The decreases reflect the inadequacy of icebreaking resources stationed on the Great Lakes. Two U.S. Coast Guard icebreakers were out of service in March. A Canadian icebreaker tasked to Lake Superior was only able to operate at 60 percent of capability (and then was idled for most of April by mechanical issues).

Iron ore cargos for steel production totaled 839,412 tons, a decrease of 41.8 percent from March 2018. All U.S. iron ore now originates from Lake Superior ports and therefore is most heavily impacted by lack of icebreaking. However, the 2019 year-to-date total for the U.S.-flag iron ore trade stands at 3.4 million tons, an increase of 19.7 percent from the 2018 year-to-date total. The increase reflects the mild weather conditions that prevailed this January.

U.S.-flag coal cargos more than quadrupled from March 2018 to 259,140 tons, while limestone loadings decreased by 71 percent compared to a year ago. Year-to-date, coal cargos total 396,000 tons, an increase of 92,000 tons. The U.S.-flag limestone trade stands at 250,000 tons, an increase of two loads in a mid-sized laker.

About Lake Carriers' Association

Lake Carriers' Association (“LCA”) represents 13 American companies that operate 46 U.S.-flag vessels (“lakers”) 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, its members can transport more than 90 million tons of dry-bulk cargo per year and employ more than 1,600 men and women, all of whom are U.S. citizens or legally admitted aliens, and provide annual wages and benefits of approximately \$125 million. In turn, the cargos its members carry create and sustain nearly 116,000 jobs in the eight Great Lakes states and generate more than \$20 billion in economic activity, \$8.3 billion in personal income, \$16.4 billion in business revenue, \$4.1 billion in local purchases and \$3.7 billion in taxes. More information is available at www.lcaships.com.

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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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