

**ADMINISTRATOR BETTY SUTTON  
REMARKS FOR  
SEAWAY SYSTEM 2015 OPENING CEREMONY  
ST. LAMBERT LOCK  
APRIL 2, 2015**

**Welcome and Introduction**

- Mesdames, Messieurs, Bonjour!
- Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I want to welcome all of our honored guests and Seaway System stakeholders. Thank you for joining us to celebrate the opening of the 57<sup>th</sup> navigation season.
- I am pleased to be here with this fine group of speakers today and want to recognize my counterpart at the Canadian Seaway, President and CEO Terence Bowles, Mr. Ken Lerner representing Lafarge Concrete, and Mr. Ian White, President and CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board, who has brought the newly constructed magnificent *CWB Marquis* here today for the historic first transit.
- As we look ahead to the 2015 shipping season, we have reason to be optimistic that it will be a good one for our binational waterway.

- To be sure, IT IS a vital waterway. The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System provides global access to the heartland of North America, where opportunities abound.

### **Regional Outreach Initiative**

- The Great Lakes economy is moving forward and expanding, and the Seaway Corporations are doing their part to add to this growth.
- Unless you are from the region, few are aware that the eight Great Lakes states and the province of Ontario together represent the world's third largest economy if they were a country.
- Helping our cities, states, and provinces in the Great Lakes region realize further economic growth and productivity via our binational waterway is the overarching point of our trade and economic development mission.
- To that end, the SLSDC recently launched a new Regional Outreach Initiative to expand our reach and

role across the Great Lakes region, what I like to call North America's 'Opportunity Belt'.

- Our goal is to expand and diversify the economy of the Great Lakes Seaway System by supporting and encouraging greater economic opportunities for the people and businesses that depend on the Great Lakes.
- Through this focused outreach initiative we are working with and supporting Great Lakes/Seaway ports, terminals, shippers, carriers, and labor to increase maritime trade.
- A full-time Great Lakes Regional Economic Development Representative is providing on-the-ground assistance to the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System stakeholder community, coordinating closely with governmental, nongovernmental, and industry stakeholders across the region.
- We are meeting with federal, state and local elected officials to offer our assistance.
- We are coordinating with other regional Federal entities, Great Lakes state transportation officials,

and regional economic development agencies to ensure Seaway System maritime transportation is understood and prioritized in regional planning.

- Through this outreach initiative, we are also serving as a resource to provide information about U.S. federal maritime transportation and funding assistance programs.
- The SLSDC Regional Initiative complements our existing joint trade development and marketing efforts with the Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation through the binational Highway H20 program.
- We are working collaboratively to provide a binational approach to identifying, promoting, and securing new trade and economic development opportunities for the region.
- Highway H20 is the path - the Opportunity Belt, with all it has to offer, is the destination.
- This is an exciting and dynamic time for the Seaway System and the Great Lakes region and the absolute right time to bring a new focus to our economic development role.

- Frankly, the Seaway exists for economic activity in the region, connecting North America's 'Opportunity Belt' to the world.
- And you all know that as well as anyone.
- I believe it is critical that the SLSDC have a direct presence in the region.
- I am confident this approach to trade and economic development will advance the SLSDC's efforts to effectively support the Great Lakes region, increase commercial trade through the waterway, and provide increased tangible benefits for the economies of the United States and Canada.

### *Asset Renewal Program*

- Both the U.S. and Canadian Seaway Corporations are also moving ahead with our programs to rehabilitate and modernize our lock and channel infrastructure.
- On the U.S. side, we are in our seventh year of the federally funded Asset Renewal Program.

- In the first six years of ARP funding, the SLSDC spent \$94 million on more than 43 separate projects that addressed various needs for the U.S. Seaway locks, maintenance dredging, operational systems, and Corporation equipment.
- An additional \$99 million is being proposed for the five year period from 2016 to 2020.
- The major projects we anticipate funding in FY16 includes the start of a \$24.8 million project to replace the SLSDC's tugboats *Robinson Bay and Performance*.
- We will also begin the early stages of installing a new hands-free vessel vacuum mooring system to ensure seamlessness and continuity in the system.
- We anticipate cutting the slots in the walls and installing the equipment next winter at the U.S. locks.
- This new technology will increase efficiency and make lock transits safer.

- The Hands-Free Mooring project is a testament to the cooperative approach inherent in the way our two Seaway Corporations work; in this case demonstrating the seamlessness in implementing new technology for the betterment of the System.
- The infrastructure renewal and modernization programs of both Seaway Corporations are vital to ensuring system availability and the flow of goods via the St. Lawrence Seaway.
- These are sizable financial investments, and when you add the private sector investments being made in ships like the *CWB Marquis*, in ports and terminals, and in other maritime-related infrastructure, we approach \$7 billion of investments for Great Lakes Seaway shipping that has been documented.
- That is a strong signal of the long-term commitment to the maritime industry in the Great Lakes and the future of our Seaway System.
- I'm looking forward to the new navigation season.

- The SLSDC will be part of a new initiative in 2015, the Great Lakes Seaway Partnership, which will work to tell the story of the importance of maritime commerce and the positive difference it makes in the lives of the citizens of our two countries.
- Again, thank you for being here today as we celebrate and welcome our first ship.
- With all of you, I look forward to a safe and robust navigation season.