



**Mr. Craig H. Middlebrook, Deputy Administrator
Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation
Remarks for 63rd Opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway
Monday, 22 March 2021, St. Lambert Lock, Montréal, Canada**

Bonjour à tous mes collègues canadiens et américains, surtout au Ministre Alghabra, Secrétaire Buttigieg, et Ministre Rouleau, et aux autres invités distingués. Je voudrais dire merci à mon bon ami et collègue, Président Terence Bowles. Merci pour l'invitation de vous joindre pour célébrer l'ouverture de la voie maritime du Saint-Laurent, et pour soutenir l'esprit d'amitié et de collaboration entre nos deux pays.

Good morning to all my Canadian and American colleagues, to our distinguished guests, and to everyone joining us virtually for today's event. I would like to particularly thank my friend and colleague, Canadian Seaway President and CEO Terence Bowles, for the invitation to join with you today as we celebrate the opening of the Seaway at St. Lambert Lock. It is an honor to have Canadian Transport Minister Omar Alghabra joining us to celebrate the opening of the Seaway and the long history of friendship and collaboration between Canada and the United States, which is the Seaway story. We are also so pleased that U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg is able to recognize the Seaway opening this year through a taped appearance.

On behalf of the U.S. Seaway, let me also extend my congratulations to Mr. Louis Martel, President and CEO of CSL Group, on having the *Baie St. Paul* be the first vessel to open the Seaway this year. This beautiful, Trillium-class vessel so aptly symbolizes the sense of progress and optimism we feel this year. CSL continues its decades-long commitment to the Great Lakes Seaway System, and we thank you for the strong partnership.

Given all the uncertainty that marked most of 2020, I am filled with optimism and hope for what the new season will bring. Why do I say that? Because there are so many indicators and trends that are pointing in a favorable direction where the Seaway is concerned.

After 62 years of operation, the Seaway remains a model of international cooperation and partnership, combining a rich past with an exciting future.

Despite our long history, there has been tremendous progress made in recent years to position our waterway as a highly competitive transportation system and an economic foundation of the US and Canadian economies.

Both the U.S. and Canada have been investing heavily in Seaway infrastructure rehabilitation and modernization. Since 2009, the U.S. Seaway has invested nearly \$200 million in our infrastructure, and together with the SLSMC, the Seaway entities have invested more than \$1 billion dollars in rebuilding and improving our lock and channel infrastructure. The combined Canadian and U.S. reinvestment in our Seaway infrastructure is impressive, but even more impressive is that since 2009, public and private Great Lakes Seaway stakeholders invested over \$7 billion dollars in capital improvements.

Some of those private investments have included fleet renewal programs undertaken by ship owners such as CSL, which regularly transits the St. Lawrence Seaway. Those of us who have worked in and around Great Lakes Seaway shipping have known for a long time that maritime navigation is one of the most - and in many cases the most - environmentally friendly modes of transportation by various measures. As the most energy efficient way to move large amounts of cargo with a low carbon footprint, maritime vessels have an important role to play enhancing trade in a highly sustainable manner. This fact may finally get the wider recognition it deserves as the role of maritime transportation in mitigating climate change starts to garner more attention in the U.S. and Canada. The Great Lakes Seaway System has an important role to play as North America's green transportation corridor.

As the 63rd Seaway navigation season gets underway, we are proud to underscore the exceptional safety and reliability record of the binational waterway. The Seaway is one of the world's safest waterways and that safety record continues to improve. That enviable track record reflects the dedication of our workforce and our partnership with our stakeholders.

This is the Seaway's 63rd opening ceremony, but it's also the first year for the U.S. Seaway as the newly renamed Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation or "GLS." The addition of "Great Lakes" to our name is a recognition of the important role our joint waterway plays in the daily lives of millions of Canadian and U.S. citizens in our region.

Thank you, again, Terry, for the opportunity to speak today on this historic day. From all of us at the GLS, and with all of you here today, we look forward to a safe and busy 2021 Navigation Season!

Aujourd'hui, à la 63^e ouverture du Seaway, il faut qu'on soit encouragé pour la nouvelle saison. C'est un jour pour célébrer l'amitié entre nos deux pays et surtout, c'est un jour pour célébrer l'association proche et productive entre la SLSMC and la GLS.