



ADVOCATING FOR GROWTH

Great Lakes/Seaway key to national economic stability

From our earliest days, settlements around the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River region and our eastern coastline utilized water as a means of transportation. Those settlements were originally founded as trading posts that facilitated commerce in an era pre-dating railroads and highways. Our relationship to the water has helped us as a nation to thrive and grow.

Today, the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence region is the industrial and agricultural heartland of both the United States and Canada. However, decades of neglect of this important infrastructure have had a devastating effect on our economy. Ships can't carry full loads. Some cargo trades have faded away and even a few ports have closed.

Advocacy. The Seaway Task Force helped secure federal funding for fixing this problem by educating the public and being politically active. We were instrumental in getting the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 passed in both Houses of Congress and signed into law by President Obama. Bipartisanship in Congress, strong labor activists and industry leaders came together and saved a deteriorating industry by increasing funding for dredging and designating the Lakes as a "system" in terms of dredging, which should put the waterway on more even footing with the coasts and inland rivers.

By ensuring a sound infrastructure network in the Great Lakes region, ports and waterways throughout our country, the shipping and shipbuilding industry will benefit and prosper.

The Seaway Task Force supports the creation of jobs by developing short sea shipping, shipbuilding and other domestic shipping services. I strongly support the Jones Act which is found in Section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920. The act

requires that goods and passengers transported by water between United States ports be done in U.S. manufactured ships, owned by U.S. citizens and crewed by U.S. citizens.

The objective and purpose of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 has stood the test of time—94 years. The act is necessary for our nation's defense and for the growth of commerce. America works to secure its borders and must also secure its ports and waterways. Requiring American vessels be made, owned and crewed by Americans is just common sense. A greater awareness and investing in our ports and waterways will make America more secure economically and militarily.

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The Harbor Maintenance Tax is the main source of funding for expenditures to maintain U.S. harbors and other related costs. This tax is an ad valorem fee on the value of commercial cargo loaded or unloaded on vessels using federally-maintained harbors. The tax is collected by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and deposited

in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to be used to recover 100 percent of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expenditures for commercial navigation. The Government Accounting Office reports the surplus is approaching \$9 billion. This balance, however, is used to help off-set the U.S. deficit rather than being used for its intended purpose. The Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 puts the "trust" back in the trust fund by requiring it to spend more and eventually, all its receipts on dredging.

Jobs. I've belonged to a union since I was in high school over 45 years ago, except for the 2.5 years I spent in the U.S. Army. The last 38 years, I've been in union leadership and for the last 11 years I've served as the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers General Vice President assigned to the Eastern Territory covering 14 states, the District of Columbia and more than 100,000 members.

Recession, and the resultant loss of jobs, is the most damaging experience a worker can face, with 2008 being the worst recession since the Great Depression. As a leader, jobs and good jobs, and a healthy industry have always been my priority. Why devote resources, time and energy into our water infrastructure? Simple:

- Nearly one-third of our Gross Domestic Product is derived from international trade and 99 percent of that trade passes through our nation's ports.

- Approximately \$1.4 trillion worth of goods move each year through our ports from and to every corner of America and the world.

- 30 million jobs are related to international trade and \$200 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue is generated by our ports every year.

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- Transportation accounts for as much as 10 percent of the total product cost for the food, clothing and other goods we buy on a daily basis.

- Every single U.S. state relies on at least 15 seaports to handle its imports and exports. The effectiveness of this indispensable infrastructure has profound economic impacts on us all.

- Nationwide, the benefits-to-cost ratio for flood protection projects is seven-to-one.

- Annual flood damage prevented through the Corps' mission is estimated at \$22.3 billion.

- In the eight Great Lakes states, nearly 130,000 jobs depend on the cargo moved on U.S.-flag Great Lakes freighters.

Since the establishment of the U.S., our inland waterways and seaports have linked America directly to the global economy. This remains true today. Goods from all over the world reach our store shelves after arriving here through our ports and products grown and made in the U.S. get to market overseas using our water transportation network.

My mission isn't a quick fix. It is a long-term project to promote job growth through the preservation and expansion of U.S. shipbuilding, shipping and related industries by optimizing the use of ports, shipping routes and the Great Lakes. I support the security of our country, the creation of jobs, training the next generation of workers for the required skills and to grow America. ■

LYNN D. TUCKER, JR.
General Vice President
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