

WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

Media Release

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Windsor-Essex Chamber Leadership Helps Prevent Stringent New York State Regulations From Damaging Region's Economy

March 13, 2012 - Windsor, Ontario – The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) played a leadership role in preventing proposed New York State legislation from imposing stringent new requirements for international vessels using the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway system. In 2011, the Chamber issued its Ballast Water and Trade policy and brought forward a resolution calling for a bi-national solution to the problem. The resolution was introduced by the Chamber and adopted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce at its 2011 AGM. The Chamber has also raised the issue with federal officials.

“We are very pleased with this decision,” said David Cree, member of the Chamber’s Transportation Committee and CEO of the Windsor Port Authority, “and hope it will lead to a bi-national solution to the ballast water issue.”

The standards proposed by New York State would have required all ships discharging ballast water in New York State and ships transiting New York State waters to have the ability to clean their ballast water to a standard that is 100 times greater than International Maritime Organization (IMO) standards. According to the Windsor Port Authority, these unattainable ballast water requirements would have impeded almost \$11 billion in business revenue and up to 72,000 jobs in both Canada and the U.S.

David Cree added “marine shipping generates almost \$200 million annually in economic activity and 973 jobs in our region. The New York regulations would have had a very negative impact on existing port activity and threatened the significant growth we are projecting for the next 5 years.” This would have also significantly reduced all inter-provincial, inter-state, and international traffic through the St. Lawrence Seaway into the Great Lakes.

The ballast water regulations were created to address any potential introduction of invasive species to New York’s waters, but ship owners were unable to comply with these regulations as no ballast water treatment technology exists to meet the water quality standards proposed by the NYDEC.

Environmental factors are important to Canadians, however, and the country does have in place strong rules and regulations to reduce the risk of aquatic species invasions. The U.S. and Canadian governments stop, inspect, and test every foreign ship entering the Great Lakes in Montreal—the gateway to the St. Lawrence Seaway. Since these protections were put into place in 2006, there have been no new discoveries of aquatic nuisance species in the Great Lakes.

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