

## OFFICERS

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James H. I. Weakley  
• Lake Carriers' Association

### First Vice President – Positions & Resolutions

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• Great Lakes District Council, ILA, AFL-CIO

### Second Vice President – Membership

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• Bay Shipbuilding Company

### Third Vice President – Government Relations

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• American Maritime Officers, AFL-CIO  
• Toledo Port Council, MTD, AFL-CIO

### Secretary

Glen G. Nekvasil  
• Lake Carriers' Association

### Treasurer

Mania Burgess  
• American Maritime Officers, AFL-CIO



# GREAT LAKES MARITIME TASK FORCE

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## NEWS RELEASE

September 29, 2006

### Oberstar Receives Iron Man Award

TOLEDO, OH---Congressman James L. Oberstar (D-MN) has received the "Iron Man Award" from Great Lakes Maritime Task Force. The award recognizes Oberstar's long commitment to healthy iron mining, steel and Great Lakes shipping industries and was presented today in Washington.

"Since being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1974, Congressman James L. Oberstar has promoted and protected America's iron mining, steel producing and Great Lakes shipping industries like none before him," said James H. I. Weakley, President of Great Lakes Maritime Task Force (GLMTF), a broad-based labor/management coalition promoting shipping on the Great Lake and related industries. "Whenever an issue affects these vital industries, you can be certain that Congressman Oberstar will play a leading role in reaching a positive conclusion."

Weakley, who is also President of Lake Carriers' Association, noted it is difficult to decide which of the Congressman's many accomplishments should be mentioned first. "There is hardly an aspect of these industries that has not benefited in some way from Congressman Oberstar's attention and dedication. Saving the icebreaker *Mackinaw* until its replacement was built was certainly crucial, but if the iron mines and steel mills were shuttered by unfair competition, what would be the gain? Congressman Oberstar has an incredible ability to grasp the big picture and address all the issues."

The U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker *Mackinaw* was to be decommissioned in 1994, but the winter of 1993/1994 was so harsh the cutter lead convoys of vessels laden with Minnesota iron ore across a frozen Lake Superior. Congressman Oberstar convinced the Coast Guard to keep the icebreaker in service and study future needs on the Great Lakes. The new *Mackinaw* was christened in 2006.

Congressman Oberstar has also been the driving force behind efforts to build another Poe-sized Lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The locks link Lake Superior

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## MEMBERS

### ILLINOIS

Hannah Marine Corporation  
Illinois International Port District

### INDIANA

Central Marine Logistics, Inc.  
Ports of Indiana

### MICHIGAN

Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority  
Edw. C. Levy Co.  
Lake Michigan Carferry Service, Inc.  
Lakes Pilots Association  
Luedtke Engineering Company  
Michigan Maritime Trades Port Council  
Pere Marquette Shipping Company  
Sargent Companies  
Seafarers International Union  
Wirt Stone Docks

### MINNESOTA

Duluth Seaway Port Authority  
Great Lakes Fleet, Inc. / Key Lakes, Inc.

### NEW YORK

American Steamship Company  
Port of Oswego Authority  
St. Lawrence Seaway Pilot's Assn.

### OHIO

American Maritime Officers, AFL-CIO  
Cleveland-Cliffs Inc  
Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority  
Faulkner, Muskovitz & Phillips  
Great Lakes District Council, ILA, AFL-CIO  
ILA Lake Erie Coal & Ore Dock Council  
ILA Local 1317  
ILA Local 1768  
Int'l Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots  
Int'l Ship Masters Association  
The Interlake Steamship Company  
Lafarge North America  
Lake Carriers' Association  
Midwest Terminals of Toledo Int'l  
Oglebay Norton Marine Services Company  
Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority  
Toledo Port Council, MTD, AFL-CIO  
United Steelworkers of America, District 1  
United Steelworkers of America, Local 5000

### PENNSYLVANIA

Erie Shipbuilding, LLC

### WISCONSIN

Bay Shipbuilding Company  
Marinette Marine Corporation  
Midwest Energy Resources Company  
The Port of Milwaukee  
Western Great Lakes Pilots Association

### GREATER WASHINGTON

American Great Lakes Ports Association  
American Shipbuilding Association  
American Maritime Officers Service, AFL-CIO  
District No.1 - PCD, MEBA, AFL-CIO  
Int'l Brotherhood of Boilermakers  
Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds, LLP  
Transportation Institute

to the lower four Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Roughly 70 percent of U.S.-Flag carrying capacity on the Lakes is restricted to one lock, the Poe. Were it to fail, U.S.-Flag shipping on the Lakes would be unable to meet the needs of commerce. The smaller Canadian and overseas vessels could transit the MacArthur Lock, but the delays would be so significant the Great Lakes would be unable to compete with other port ranges. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers considers the Soo Locks the single point of failure that could shut down Great Lakes shipping.

“Congressman Oberstar has repeatedly tried to move the replacement lock forward, but a flawed funding formula has stalled the project since its authorization in 1986,” said Weakley. “He has included the replacement lock, built at full Federal expense, in the House’s Water Resources Development Act of 2006. If the Senate concurs during conference, the lock will finally become reality and assure the future of domestic, U.S./Canada and overseas shipping via the Great Lakes.”

American labor has long considered Oberstar a great ally, especially the men and women who crew the U.S.-Flag Great Lakes fleet. “Congressman Oberstar was among the first in the House of Representatives to sign a concurrent resolution defending the Jones Act, the law that reserves domestic waterborne commerce to vessels that are U.S.-owned, -built and -crewed, from unprecedented attacks in the mid-1990s,” explained Weakley. “Were it not for his legendary support, a U.S. flag on the stern of a vessel would be a rare sight in American waters.” The Congressman saved more jobs when he played a key role in the reopening of an iron ore mine that now thrives as United Taconite.

“I am truly honored to receive this award,” said Congressman Oberstar. “I consider every day I serve in the House as a privilege that bears great responsibility. While much has been accomplished to keep Great Lakes shipping safe and efficient, we face new challenges, in particular, restoring adequate funding for dredging Great Lakes ports and waterways. It is incomprehensible to me that the ships that depart our Minnesota harbors cannot carry full loads of iron ore and low-sulfur coal because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not get enough money to maintain the system. This waterway is too important a part of the national transportation infrastructure to be treated like a poor relation. In the next Congress, I will do everything in my power to bring our fair share of Federal dredging dollars back to the Great Lakes.”

The Great Lakes Maritime Task Force was founded in Toledo, Ohio, in 1992 to promote domestic and international shipping on the Great Lakes. It is the largest coalition to ever speak for the Great Lakes shipping community. Its goals include restoring adequate funding for dredging of Great Lakes deep-draft ports and waterways, construction of a second Poe-sized lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan; preserving the domestic steelmaking infrastructure; protecting the nation’s cabotage laws; maximizing the Lakes overseas trade; and opposing exports and increased diversions of Great Lakes water.

Minnesota-based members of Great Lakes Maritime Task Force are Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Great Lakes Fleet, Inc. / Key Lakes, Inc., and Marine Tech, LLC. In total, the Task Force represents 57 companies and organizations in the United States that cover the spectrum of Great Lakes shipping: Vessel owners and operators, cargo shippers, port authorities, shipboard and shoreside labor organizations, vessel construction and repair facilities, dredgers and many other interests related to domestic and international shipping on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway.