



Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

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Effects Of Light Loading Evident Again

Great Lakes Coal Trade Down 7 Percent In April

CLEVELAND—Shipments of coal on the Great Lakes slipped below 4 million net tons in April, a decrease of 7 percent compared to a year ago. The monthly total was slightly above the 5-year average for the period, but only because April 2003 shipments were slowed by extreme ice conditions.

The dredging crisis again took its toll on the coal trade. The largest coal cargo carried in the Head-of-the-Lakes trade (Lake Superior ports to Lower Lakes ports) in April totaled only 64,218 net tons. The next largest cargo was less than 63,800 net tons. These cargos were carried in 1,000-foot-long U.S.-Flag Lakers, and ships this size have hauled nearly 71,000 tons of coal in a single trip. The peak cargos came during a period of high water which masked the effects of inadequate dredging. In 2006, however, water levels are down, so there is nothing to offset decades of shortfalls in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' budget for dredging Great Lakes ports and waterways.

For the year, the Lakes coal trade stands at 7.7 million net tons, an increase of 9 percent compared to the same point in 2005. The 21 percent increase over the 5-year average for the January-April timeframe is again somewhat distorted by the thick ice fields that formed on the Great Lakes during the winter of 2002/2003 and significantly slowed waterborne commerce.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 14 American corporations that operate 55 U.S.-Flag vessels on the Great Lakes. These vessels carry the raw materials that drive the nation's economy: Iron ore and fluxstone for the steel industry, limestone and cement for the construction industry, coal for power generation.... Collectively, these vessels can transport as much as 125 million tons of cargo a year when high water levels offset the lack of adequate dredging of Great Lakes ports and waterways. For more information, contact Glen G. Nekvasil, Vice President - Corporate Communications: Tel: (216) 861-0592 / Fax: (216) 241-8262 / E-Mail: info@lcaships.com.

-30-

The above information is based on data from knowledgeable sources. However, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Lake Carriers' Association assumes no legal responsibility for the outcome of decisions or commitments made on the basis of this information. This report represents the views of Lake Carriers' Association and may not necessarily represent the views of its individual members.

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The Association Representing Operators of U.S.-Flag Vessels on the Great Lakes

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