



Lake Carriers' Association For Immediate Release

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Dredging Crisis Limits Upturn

Great Lakes Iron Ore Trade Revs Up a Bit in May

Cleveland---Shipments of iron ore on the Great Lakes in May increased 5 percent compared to a year ago. However, low water levels and lack of dredging continued to trim vessel loads significantly. Although many U.S.-Flag Lakers are designed to load to 28 feet or more, vessels transiting the St. Marys River (which connects Lake Superior to the rest of the system) had to load to less than 26 feet. For a 1,000-foot-long vessel in the iron ore trade, 2 feet of lost draft translates into 3,000 or more tons of cargo left at the loading dock.

Lack of adequate dredging in ports further amplified the problem. A vessel delivering iron ore to Huron, Ohio, had to limit its draft to 25' 06" and still had difficulty entering the harbor. Had a properly-maintained navigation system allowed for a full load, the vessel could have delivered more than 40,000 tons. Instead, less than 35,000 tons were in its holds.

For the year, the Great Lakes iron ore trade stands at 16.7 million tons, a decrease of 5 percent compared to the same point in 2006, and nearly 2 percent behind the 5-year average for the January-May timeframe.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 18 American corporations that operate 63 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. More information is available at www.lcaships.com.

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Representing Operators of U.S.-Flag Vessels on the Great Lakes Since 1880