



# Lake Carriers' Association

## For Immediate Release

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### **Dredging Crisis Means No Growth**

### **U.S.-Flag Great Lakes Fleet Cargo Total in March Even with a Year Ago**

Cleveland — The U.S.-Flag Great Lakes fleet hauled 2.5 million net tons of cargo in March, essentially a tie with a year ago. March is not a full month of navigation. The vessels fit-out at various times during the month, with the majority getting underway around the time the locks at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan open on March 25.

Although the cargo total was basically unchanged from a year ago, the fleet was again vastly underutilized because of a lack of adequate dredging. The largest iron ore cargo loaded in March was 59,930 tons. The vessel has a rated capacity of nearly 70,000 tons, so it left port with 14 percent of its hauling power negated by the dredging crisis.

The top coal load – 58,994 tons – also represented only 86 percent of the vessel's rated capacity.

When these cargos are compared to the record cargos established during a period of high water in 1997, the dredging crisis is slashing vessels' payloads by as much as 17 percent. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must remove 18 million cubic yards of sediment to restore the Great Lakes navigation system to project dimensions, at an estimated cost of \$230 million. Last December, Congress increased the Corps' Lakes dredging budget for FY08 to \$138 million, which should allow the Corps to remove about 1 million cubic yards of backlog. However, the Administration's proposed budget for FY09 cuts the Lakes dredging budget to less than \$90 million. Congress must boost the Lakes dredging budget for the next several years or the fleet will remain underutilized and industries dependent on raw materials disadvantaged in the global economy.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 16 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 more than 115 million tons of cargo a year when high water levels offset lack of adequate dredging. More information is available at [www.lcaships.com](http://www.lcaships.com).

Source: Lake Carriers' Association.

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*Information 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.*

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

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