



Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

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Light Loading Continues to Hamper Trade

Low Inventories at Stone Quarries Affect Fleet Total

Cleveland—U.S.-Flag Lakers moved 9.9 million net tons of dry-bulk cargo on the Great Lakes in April, a decrease of 3.8 percent compared to a year ago. While loadings of iron ore and coal were in line with a year ago, low inventories of limestone produced a 9-percent decrease in that commodity.

Falling water levels, in particular on Lake Superior, and inadequate dredging of ports and waterways system-wide, again limited the amount of cargo vessels could carry each trip. The largest iron ore cargo loaded in April – 62,325 net tons – represented only 89.4 percent of the vessel's rated capacity. April's top coal load in the Head-of-the-Lakes trade – 62,666 net tons – was only a slight improvement: 91 percent of the vessel's capacity.

While lack of adequate dredging has plagued Great Lakes shipping for decades, Lake Superior has fallen to its lowest level in more than 80 years. The Lake is 18 inches below its long term average and nearly 13 inches lower than it was just a year ago. With five of the six U.S. iron ore loading ports located on Lake Superior, as well as the largest coal-shipping facility, significant carrying capacity has been neutralized until water levels rise and ports are again dredged to project dimensions.

For the year, U.S.-Flag carriage stands at 15.9 million tons, a decrease of nearly 12 percent from the same point in 2006, but a slight increase over the 5-year average for the January-April 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 transport as much as 125 million tons of cargo a year when high water levels offset lack of adequate dredging. More information is available at www.lcaship.com.

Source: Lake Carriers' Association.

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-30-

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.

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

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