

Testimony of James H.I. Weakley, President, Lake Carriers' Association
Before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Hearing on Study on a New Canadian Transportation and Logistics Strategy (Trade Corridors)
Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada
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Good morning, Madam Chair, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

My name is Jim Weakley and I serve as the President of the Lake Carriers' Association, based in Cleveland, Ohio. On behalf of my members, I would like to congratulate you on launching this important dialogue. A focused and thoughtful discussion on the Canadian transportation and logistics supply chain is well-warranted. Given the highly integrated nature of the North American trade and logistics network, this dialogue must include a focus on cross-border issues, maritime trade and opportunities shared between your great country and mine.

To illustrate just how interconnected we are, when a Laker transits the Detroit/St. Clair River system, it crosses the border 17 times. The natural trade corridor formed by the 8 Great Lakes States and 2 Canadian provinces, if they were a separate country, would have the third largest economy in the world. For these reasons, I have regular ongoing interaction with many Government of Canada representatives in the course of my work.

LCA was founded in 1880 and is one of the oldest trade associations in the United States. We represent the operators of US-flagged vessels operating on the Great Lakes. Our members employ more than 1,600 people, and our cargo generates over 116,000 jobs, \$20 billion in economic activity and \$3.7 billion in taxes, in US dollars. The bi-national Great Lakes Navigation System creates 237,000 jobs, \$35 billion in economic activity, \$6.6 billion in taxes and saves its customers \$3.6 billion in transportation costs. Our ongoing contributions benefit both Americans and Canadians.

We are proponents of more trade and commerce between Canada and the United States. We strongly recommend that both national governments take a holistic approach to the bi-national Great Lakes trade corridor when making investments, policy and regulatory decisions. The words "harmonization" and "interoperability" are frequently used when discussing Canada-US trade. The only way to fully enable the incredible economic potential of trade and commerce between our two nations, particularly here in the Great Lakes Region, is to ensure that decisions are made with these two key tenets in mind.

A new transportation strategy must take into account critical capability needs such as enhanced and more reliable ice-breaking services, and deploy strategic capital accordingly. We should also electronically connect USCG and CCG command centers on the Great Lakes like they have done on the West Coast. In terms of regulation, taking a bi-national approach to air emissions, ballast water, and protection of species

at risk, through the lens of cross-border integration and harmonization, adds to our ability to generate economic development and good-paying jobs on both sides of the border.

I commend you on undertaking this important study. Transportation is the lubricant that keeps our economies moving. The bi-national Great Lakes trade corridor continues to contribute much to both of our nations. I look forward to your questions and to ongoing engagement with Canadian Parliamentarians and other government officials. Thank you.