



Windsor & District Chamber of Commerce  
2575 Ouellette Place, Windsor, Ontario, Canada N8X 1L9  
(519) 966-3696 • (519) 966-0603  
Website: [www.windsorchamber.org](http://www.windsorchamber.org) Email: [info@windsorchamber.org](mailto:info@windsorchamber.org)

April 9, 2003

The Honourable Frank Klees  
Minister of Transportation  
Third Floor, Ferguson Block  
77 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z8

Dear Minister:

As you are no doubt aware, the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway System is a critical transportation link for our nation and particularly for the Province of Ontario. The Welland Canal System handles in excess of 40 million tonnes of cargo per year, and well over 200 million tonnes moves throughout the Great Lakes during a single season. Those cargoes include grain, salt, steel, iron ore, petroleum and lumber – cargoes which are essential to the economic well being of our province. This results in literally hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity and tens of thousands of jobs created by marine and related industries. In addition, the marine mode is by far the most environmentally sensitive form of transportation, and has the potential to take thousands of trucks off our already overcrowded provincial highway system.

The Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway System has been in a period of decline over the past 15 years, and continues to face numerous critical issues. A short summary of those issues would include the following:

1. Canadian Coast Guard cost recovery fees – The Canadian Coast Guard has in recent years introduced a regime of “user pay” for the Canadian marine industry. This includes such costs as ice-breaking, aids to navigation and dredging. While most in the industry are not averse to the concept of “user pay”, we feel that the Coast Guard must demonstrate that it is providing these services at the lowest cost possible. In our view, this is not currently being done. In addition, we believe that the current system produces numerous inequities which need to be addressed before any “user pay” system can be fairly administered.

... /2

2. The St. Lawrence Seaway System expansion study – The United States Corps of Engineers is proposing a cost/benefit study for a major expansion of the St. Lawrence Seaway System. This could potentially allow much larger ships to enter the Great Lakes, and could produce significant economic expansion and growth at Ontario's ports. The Canadian Federal government has been asked to be a partner in this study, but has not made a decision as yet.
3. The most significant issue facing Canadian ports is that of security. We believe that national security is the responsibility of the Federal government, and as has been done in the United States, the necessary risk assessments and infrastructure enhancements at our nation's ports should be paid for by the Federal government. In the United States over \$300 million has already been spent in this regard, with much more promised – in Canada, almost nothing has been spent to date. This is not only an issue of national security, but one of competitiveness for our ports. If Canada's ports are forced to pay for enhanced security, these costs must be passed along to our users, drastically impacting our ability to compete with U.S. ports.

Minister, these are only a few of the critical issues which are currently facing the Great Lakes marine industry and Ontario's ports. We appreciate that shipping and navigation is a Federal responsibility under the Constitution, but we still believe that the Province of Ontario has a very important role to play. That role could include numerous initiatives – first and foremost, we believe that the Province should take a proactive role with the Federal government in discussion of issues which impact on the Great Lakes and Ontario's ports; second, we feel that the Province should examine possible areas for providing funding to enhance the Seaway System and Ontario's port system; and third, we would like to explore the possibility of a marketing campaign led by the Province to promote the advantages of Ontario's marine and port systems.

In order to achieve these goals we respectfully submit that your Ministry must establish a marine group with the resources and manpower to examine these issues, liaise with the marine industry, and make appropriate recommendations for consideration. In short, we hope that your Ministry and the Province will become more engaged in this dialogue and in the current issues which are threatening this very important industry.

We thank you for this opportunity to present our views, and look forward to discussing this matter with you and your staff at your earliest convenience.

Yours very truly,

Michael Robinson  
Chairman of the Board