



U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm

News

DOT 36-03
Thursday, May 01, 2003

Contact: Kim Riddle
Tel: (202) 366-5580

U.S.-Canadian Transportation Departments Sign Memorandum of Cooperation To Ensure the Long-Term Success of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta and Transport Canada Minister David Collenette today signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) to ensure the ongoing success of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Specifically, the document further enhances binational collaboration on a comprehensive transportation study of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway waterway.

During a signing ceremony in Washington, DC, Secretary Mineta said, "The St. Lawrence Seaway is a vital economic artery to the ports of America's heartland. This Memorandum of Cooperation lays the groundwork for building a healthier, more efficient transportation system for this vital resource of Canada and the United States."

Minister Collenette concurred on the importance of a detailed system review for both nations. "The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway system is the result of a strong partnership that provides enormous benefit to both Canada and the United States. Planning to ensure the continued viability of this waterway requires collaborative approaches among the many stakeholders involved on both sides of the border. The signing of this Memorandum of Cooperation further enhances collaboration between our two agencies to evaluate the future needs of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the transportation infrastructure on which it depends."

The efforts to develop a framework for cooperation, which this MOC represents, arose during discussions between U.S. and Canadian officials related to the U.S.-Canadian Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Review. The review will provide baseline data for the environment, engineering features and economic conditions of the system, and will require close cooperation among five entities: Transport Canada, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, and DOT's Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation.

The MOC signed today will enhance collaboration between the DOT and Transport Canada, helping them to:

- identify factors and trends affecting the domestic and international marine transportation industries;
- assess current and future transportation requirements for the waterway;

- evaluate the reliability and condition of the waterway, including the costs and benefits of maintaining the existing infrastructure; and
- assess the environmental, as well as the engineering and economic factors, associated with the current and future needs of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway system and the transportation infrastructure on which it depends..

A critical component of North America's transportation network, the 2,300-mile long Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System annually handles more than 200 million tons of cargo, contributes over \$6 billion to the economies of both countries and directly supports more than 65,000 jobs in Canada and the United States. The region served by the System is home to almost 100 million people, roughly one-third of the combined U.S.-Canadian population.

###