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NEW LOCK FOR GREAT LAKES SHIPPING?

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Port directors are trying to gather steam to have a new large lock built at Sault Saint Marie, Michigan. They say without the improvement, ports on Lakes Michigan and Superior will lose the ability to be major players in shipping. The Great Lakes Radio Consortium's Mike Simonson reports:

The Soo Locks have been around since 1855... with the largest of the locks built around 1970. That's the "Poe Lock," the only one that super-carriers, so-called "thousand footers," can use to get from the lower Great Lakes to Lake Superior.

Duluth Port Authority's Captain Ray Skelton says the Poe Lock isn't enough.

"Should something happen to, bear in mind the lock opened in 1970, 65% of our carrying capacity would be held up. So the concept of that second, larger lock does two things: Number one, gives us the capacity to get away from these traffic jams that occur at the Poe, and in addition to that if they had to de-water the Poe sometime during the season, we'd still have access for our wide beam ships."

Skelton says 65% of the lock would be built with federal money. The rest will come from the eight Great Lakes states. The total is expected to be \$225 million. Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania have committed money to the new lock.

For the Great Lakes Radio Consortium, I'm Mike Simonson.

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