

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2204

June 3, 2005

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Chairman  
Senate Commerce Committee  
508 Dirksen Office Bld.  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Ranking Member  
Senate Commerce Committee  
508 Dirksen Office Bld.  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Stevens and Ranking Member Inouye:

The Administration's FY06 budget proposal includes a provision to fund the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC) with revenues collected through a new toll. The proposal is intended to off-set operations costs of the SLSDC, but it undermines the commercial viability of Great Lakes maritime commerce.

We were pleased that the Senate Budget Committee did not specifically include the tolls in the FY06 Budget Resolution, and we respectfully request that the Commerce Committee reject the proposal as a source of revenue.

The Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway System is one of the country's most important waterways and one of the most competitive transportation routes serving the United States interior markets. An estimated \$400 billion worth of cargo has moved through the Seaway in its 46-year history, and 40 to 50 million tons of cargo are shipped to and from Canada annually. Important American industries, such as agriculture, steel, and coal, rely on the affordable commercial navigation provided by the Seaway. Tolls would result in the loss of maritime commerce and reduced access to foreign markets for farmers while at the same time driving up shipping costs for other modes of transportation.

We are also extremely concerned about the impact of the proposed toll on the economy of the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes District Council of the International Longshoremen's Association anticipates that the new tolls and resulting loss of maritime commerce would cause the loss of hundreds of waterfront jobs and exacerbate economic depression.

Finally, we oppose the tolls because they amount to a double-tax on the Great Lakes/ St.

Lawrence Seaway shippers as the industry already pays into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which is used to pay for navigation infrastructure.

Again, we urge you to reject the proposed St. Lawrence Seaway tolls during your Committee's reconciliation process.

Sincerely,

Debbie Steiner

Carl Levin

Herb Kohl

Rick Lugar

Mark Dayton

Tom Feingold

Gary V. Hennrich

Bob Dera

Nancy Clemons

Mike DeWine

Dr. Tim

Erin Boych