



Joint Statement from Welland Canal Mayors regarding St. Lawrence Seaway labour disruption

October 23, 2023 - The Mayors of the Welland Canal issued a joint call today pushing for both sides of the St. Lawrence Seaway labour disruption to get back to the bargaining table, and reiterated the vital need for the Seaway to maintain operations. With the visible imagery of ships lining up in front of the canal at both ends, the ramifications of the shutdown are clear to the Mayors of Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold and St. Catharines.

The Seaway is one of the most vital conduits for trade throughout North America, supporting over \$12 billion in economic activity annually. The potential impacts of a strike on the economy, jobs, and the supply chain highlight the importance of marine shipping on the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Seaway, and the need to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible.

The Seaway has a long and respected reputation for reliability in its operations, and the Mayors expressed the desire for the Seaway to resolve this matter with minimal disruption, and with the support of the Federal government if necessary. They also expressed the expectation that contingency planning would be undertaken to support the continued movement of vital commodities during a strike.

"Much of Port Colborne's livelihood hinges on the bustling activity along the Welland Canal," said Port Colborne Mayor Bill Steele. "I wholeheartedly urge the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation and Unifor to expedite their efforts in reaching a fair and reasonable agreement. While I extend my empathy to the employees currently engaged in this strike, it is important to recognize that the seamless flow of goods through the Great Lakes stands at the core of our regional economy along the Canal. Prolonged labour unrest has the potential to send ripples of disruption across various sectors throughout North America."

"It is easy to take for granted the St. Lawrence Seaway, a vital artery that connects communities and economies along its shores," said Welland Mayor Frank Campion. "With open communication, a willingness to negotiate, and a shared goal of ensuring the flow of goods along this waterway continues to meet the needs of millions, the current labour dispute can be short-lived. But it is up to all parties involved to continue working together, communicating, and sourcing a fair and expedient outcome to a work stoppage that could have long-lasting consequences."

"The Welland Canal is a critical piece of marine transportation infrastructure that enables the global movement of goods through the St. Lawrence Seaway System," said Thorold Mayor Terry Ugolini. "This unique asset has enabled the growth of the Niagara

Ports – Thorold location that leverages the multimodal infrastructure that connects, marine, rail, and road to support local jobs in the agriculture, logistics, and manufacturing sectors of the Niagara economy. The free movement of ships through this marine corridor is fundamental to the prosperity of communities throughout North America and globally. I hope that the St. Lawrence Seaway and Unifor are able to come to the table and negotiate an agreement that is fair to both sides.”

“The St. Lawrence Seaway is an intricate system of infrastructure representing significant capital investments by both the private and public sectors, and is a vital trade corridor that makes a significant economic contribution to both our regional economy and the entirety of North America,” said St. Catharines Mayor Mat Siscoe. “The Seaway connects some of the largest inland markets and consumers to the world. A swift and fair contract settlement will ensure our community remains a priority for continued employment and reinvestment.”

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City of Port Colborne

Mayor Frank Campion
City of Welland

Mayor Terry Ugulini
City of Thorold

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