

# Big Ideas for the Great Lakes

By John Jamian  
Deputy Maritime Administrator



As the Deputy Maritime Administrator of the Maritime Administration (MARAD), I am pleased that the Department of Transportation and MARAD are increasingly focusing on the maritime sector. As such, we have launched a wide ranging review of maritime policies, called SEA-21, through which we hope to address the maritime component of our transportation system.

Short Sea Shipping, one important component of this review, is designed to move more freight by water and to work in partnership with other intermodal transportation systems. It is intended to increase capacity and to assist trucks and railroads by easing congestion on our roads and highways.

Short Sea Shipping is also known as the National Water Highway System, to make sure everyone knows it includes inland waterways and the Great Lakes. The new initiative would have an immediate positive impact on the Great Lakes region. For example, choke points on I-75, I-94, and other highways could be greatly reduced and waiting times at border crossings could be decreased, if not entirely eliminated.

The economic benefits of reduced time spent idling in traffic are obvious from a retailer's point of view. Equally important is the fact that highway congestion gives rise to losses in international trade and domestic efficiency and can have a serious negative impact on the American job market, national security, and environmental progress.

The Great Lakes region has much to gain from the SEA-21 initiative. For instance, U.S. foreign trade and freight volumes at American ports are expected to increase by 50 percent by 2020. Certainly, the Great Lakes region will benefit from this growth by being able to utilize some of the infrastructure development programs in the initiative.

Another MARAD initiative currently under consideration by Congress is included in the Bush Administration's Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act, known as SAFETEA. It contains provisions that will significantly assist today's efforts to move people and cargo more efficiently and effectively in the Great Lakes region.

I am proud of the fact that the Maritime Administration helped establish the Port Security Grant Program, which provides U.S. seaports with financing for facility and operational security improvements and awards money to applicants who demonstrate the willingness to explore the application of technologies. Many U.S. seaports, including ports in the Great Lakes region, have already benefited from the more than 568 million dollars now available through the program.

Many Americans are not aware of the fact that the Great Lakes transportation system—with ports 700 miles from the nearest ocean—connects us with the global economy. They do not understand how modern waterborne commerce functions as part of our overall national transportation system and how the system allows for efficient trade between the United States and the international community. "Just-in-time" assembly and delivery make the Great Lakes transportation system an even more critical link in our economic chain.

I look forward to working with the Great Lakes maritime industry to ensure that economic prosperity for the region translates into economic health for our entire nation.

## Upcoming Events

### National Propeller Club Conference and Convention

Biloxi, Miss.

October 5-8, 2004

[www.propellerclubhq.com](http://www.propellerclubhq.com)

### SOCPC Meeting

Toledo, Ohio

October 13-14, 2004

[www.socpc.org](http://www.socpc.org)

### MARAD-Sponsored Third Annual Short Sea Shipping Conference—2004

October 13-15, 2004

New York City

[www.shortseashippingconference2004.com](http://www.shortseashippingconference2004.com)

If you know of an upcoming event you would like published in the *MARAD Update*, please submit it to Ella Thomas at [ella.thomas@marad.dot.gov](mailto:ella.thomas@marad.dot.gov).