

Council of Great Lakes Governors
Maritime Task Force
Recommendations

The Governors and Premiers charged the Council of Great Lakes Governors Maritime Task Force with developing recommendations for improving the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River maritime transport system (MTS). The Task Force delivered its consensus recommendations on April 25, 2014. At that time, the Governors and Premiers directed the Task Force to move forward with implementing these recommendations.

State/Provincial Action

- Immediately identify one or more persons in each State or Province who will coordinate MTS issues both within each jurisdiction across agencies and on a regional basis. This will build maritime capacity within the States and Provinces and help to develop and implement State and Provincial-level policies, plans and initiatives to promote the competitiveness of the MTS and the overall multimodal system.
- By the next Leadership Summit, develop an up-to-date inventory of MTS assets and investments (including cruising infrastructure) using a common framework, in partnership with marine sector asset owners, to enable the States and Provinces to identify strategic priorities for the MTS in close collaboration with industry stakeholders. This inventory should be consolidated into a system-wide inventory that can be leveraged as part of the States' and Provinces' multimodal freight transportation planning efforts. On an ongoing basis, the States and Provinces should compile an annual summary of MTS investments and major policy actions.
- By the next Leadership Summit, create a list of regional maritime priorities to inform policy and funding. This list will establish a framework for State and Provincial MTS engagement, and ensure that decisions meet regional goals. Furthermore, this is an important step for future State and Provincial engagement with the owners, regulators, and other stakeholders of the MTS.
- By the next Leadership Summit, develop a model for a 21st century MTS regional entity to:
 - Foster investment in the MTS from all sources, including Canadian and U.S. federal governments, States, Provinces and public-private partnerships, and the private sector;
 - Promote MTS efficiency improvements;
 - Improve MTS connectivity and linkages;
 - Stimulate regional and international trade through greater access to global markets;
 - Coordinate MTS priority-setting, planning and implementation; and,
 - Manage MTS strategic partnerships.
- Recognize the important role of maritime transportation as part of the regional multimodal freight transportation system and commit to the inclusion of the MTS in State, Provincial and regional multimodal freight transportation policies and plans. This effort builds on the Governors' and Premiers' resolution that identifies the States' and Provinces' critical role in implementing and advocating for the changes necessary to improve the MTS.
- Promote ongoing or planned State and Provincial actions to improve the MTS and work with regional stakeholders to build support for State and Provincial leadership on MTS issues.

Federal Action

- Call on the US and Canadian federal governments to recognize the MTS as a unique system. The Governors and Premiers will advocate for unique treatment of the regional maritime system in federal policy and regulations. This could inform options to reform federal policies and regulations in a way that is consistent with the unique environment and opportunities.

- Call on the US and Canadian federal governments to invest in the MTS.
- Advocate for the full expenditure of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF). The full use of Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) revenue for its intended purpose of harbor dredging and other maintenance will reduce shipping costs, foster job creation, and enhance the overall competitiveness of the MTS and regional economy.
- Encourage MTS fleet investment and efficiency improvements, including through the potential use of alternative fuels like LNG. This will lead to greater operational efficiencies, improved reliability and enhanced environmental sustainability.
- Exempt new, incremental non-bulk cargo moving through US Great Lakes-St. Lawrence ports from the HMT. This measure would encourage new traffic and could help to avoid further surface transportation congestion. There would be no reduction in total HMT fees collected as a result of this particular measure, since the exemption would apply only to new traffic not currently moving within the MTS.

Regional Actions

- Coordinate with existing regional trade promotion efforts, including Council of Great Lakes Governors trade missions and HwyH2O international programming to expand the MTS brand and establish relationships between regional ports and international ports and shippers.
- Improve the return on MTS investments by taking a holistic approach to addressing the U.S. dredging crisis and encouraging sustainability. For example:
 - Request that the U.S. federal government waive or otherwise allocate small business dredging requirements in such a way to improve regional flexibility and expand opportunities for lower cost service providers. This effort could better leverage dedicated maintenance funding and expand opportunities for regional companies.
 - Continue and expand on strategies to promote beneficial reuse of dredged materials thereby reducing the cost of management and disposal.
 - Explore opportunities to further reduce sediment loading and reduce the need for dredging.
- Encourage regulatory harmonization, including through the US-Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council, to encourage greater consistency and reduce compliance costs for MTS users.