

The Saint Lawrence Seaway

A reliable and ready shipping option for Midwest agriculture.



In the United States, the Great Lakes region includes Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and New York - states that serve as major centers of agricultural production and generate a wide range of high-value commodities. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway offers a dependable, efficient and environmentally responsible gateway to key global markets. The St. Lawrence Seaway is a win for Midwest agricultural producers, agribusinesses, shippers and international buyers.

Great Lakes Region Top 10 Agricultural Exports

USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Foreign Trade Statistics. Based on commodity dollar value.

1. Soybeans	6. Distillers Grains
2. Corn	7. Bakery Good, Cereals & Pasta
3. Food Preparations	8. Chocolate and Cocoa
4. Dairy Products	9. Soybean Meal
5. Pork & Pork Products	10. Nonalcoholic Beverages

Seaway Quick Facts

- The St. Lawrence Seaway spans 2,340 miles from the Atlantic Ocean into America's Midwest.
- 15 U.S. and Canadian Seaway locks make up the shipping system.
- Over 100 individual public and private ports service commercial Great Lakes shipping.
- Approximately thirty-seven million tons of cargo was shipped via the St. Lawrence Seaway during the 2024 season



Great Lakes Seaway Ports - American Great Lakes Ports Association (AGLPA). (2024, March 4). American Great Lakes Ports Association (AGLPA).

<https://www.greatlakesports.org/industry-overview/great-lakes-seaway-ports/>

St. Lawrence Seaway Cargo Movements Total 37 Million Tonnes During 2024 Navigation Season. (2025, February 27). The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation.

<https://greatlakes-seaway.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Final2024-Tonnage-press-release-en.pdf>

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System. (2014, March 21). Saint Lawrence Seaway. <https://www.seaway.dot.gov/about/great-lakes-st-lawrence-seaway-system>

Environment and Sustainability - Port Authority. (2024, July 30). Duluth Seaway Port Authority. <https://duluthport.com/community/environment-and-sustainability/>

Research and Traffic Group. (2013). Environmental and Social Impacts of Marine Transport in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway Region Executive Summary Research and Traffic Group. <https://greatlakes-seaway.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Impacts-Comparison-ExSum.pdf>

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The Sustainability Advantage

Using the St. Lawrence Seaway to ship goods is one of the most efficient, sustainable, and future-focused logistics decisions that shippers can make. A single laker vessel can move 70,000 tons of cargo—the equivalent of 700 rail cars or 2,800 trucks. This efficiency directly translates into lower emissions: shipping goods by vessel reduces CO₂ output by 17% compared to rail and a remarkable 78% compared to trucks.

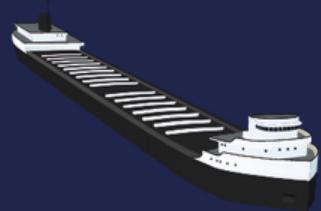
The Canadian and U.S. governments have jointly committed to establishing the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System Green Shipping Corridor Network Initiative, a binational effort designed to coordinate a major transition toward zero-carbon maritime transportation by 2050.

- Dependable alternative when low water levels disrupt shipping
- Strengthens the resilience of the U.S. supply chain by adding crucial redundancy and diversifying export routes
- Provides direct, efficient access to major global markets including the European Union, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and North Africa
- Features modern, high-capacity infrastructure designed for both bulk cargo and containerized freight

Seaway Vessel Comparison



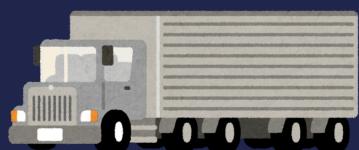
One laker sized vessel can carry 70,000 tons of bulk cargo.



The same 70,000 tons are cargo requires 2 salties, each with a 30,000 ton bulk capacity.



This 70,000 tons of bulk cargo requires 700 rail cars.



2,800 semi-trucks are required to carry 70,000 tons of bulk cargo.