

**SLSDC Administrator Johnson's Remarks
Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the St. Lawrence Seaway
Massena, NY – Friday, July 10, 2009**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Consul General Rioux, President Corfe, and other honored friends from Canada; Secretary LaHood, Chairman Oberstar, and Congresswoman Kaptur; my fellow employees of the U.S. and Canadian Seaway Corporations, and other distinguished guests; with a profound sense of history and pride I welcome you to Massena, New York, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway. That so many of you would take the time to travel from Canada and the United States to commemorate the opening of this waterway is a sure sign of the Seaway's continuing vitality, its historic past, and its bright future.

We stand today where the Queen of England and the Vice President of the United States once stood to celebrate the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Moses-Saunders Power Dam. As an infrastructure project alone, the Seaway stands apart – as a bold idea to link the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to the world through a deep-draft waterway. I haven't been in government long, but long enough to realize -- and perhaps the Secretary and Chairman will agree with me on this -- that getting approval and funding for transportation projects is hard work. So, I marvel at the Seaway, not only as a breathtaking engineering accomplishment, but also as an example of what strong leadership, a worthwhile vision, and the political will to take on a challenge can accomplish. Prime Minister St. Laurent, President Eisenhower, Transport Minister Chevrier, Congressman Blatnik, and so many others – we are here today to honor their leadership, vision, and force of will to realize a centuries-old dream.

The Seaway is much more than an infrastructure project, however. It is a grand experiment in binational collaboration and friendship. Never before had two countries undertaken to construct, operate, and maintain jointly a transportation asset of this magnitude. A vessel traveling from Montreal to Lake Erie crosses the international border 27 times, yet that

ship's transit experience is as seamless as if it were merely traveling up the Chesapeake. It is a testament to the confidence of the Seaway's creators in the ability of Canada and the U.S. to collaborate on something so complicated and unprecedented. It is also a tribute to the dedication, creativity, and fortitude of the many Americans and Canadians who have worked at the Seaway over the last 50 years who met, and continue to meet, the daily challenges of running a binational waterway.

As a major international transportation route, the Seaway has more than proven its worth by moving over 2.5 billions tons of cargo valued at more than \$375 billion dollars. The power dam project that accompanied the Seaway has immeasurably improved the quality of life of millions of Canadians and Americans. As a daring experiment in international patnership, the Seaway remains a shining example of how nations can cooperate in a conflicted world.

Today we celebrate the history of the Seaway. But we also look to the next 50 years. As a vital transportation route, that future looks bright: our two governments have committed hundreds of millions of dollars to renew the Seaway's infrastructure and our users are investing billions in new ships and equipment. As an experiment in collaboration, the Seaway continues to move forward, as we work to tackle new environmental challenges and to build new bridges to stakeholders and neighbors such as the Akwesasne Mohawk. I am honored, as the Ninth Administrator of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, to be here with you to celebrate this vital international waterway--the St. Lawrence Seaway! Thank you all for coming!