
Adopted on Oct. 7, 2008

Resolution: Heightened urgency for Soo Lock expansion

Whereas, the Great Lakes Commission has been on record in support of building a second 1,000 foot “Poe-sized” Lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., since soon after the project was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986; and

Whereas, the Commission has repeatedly taken the lead in support of the project by securing a waiver on interest for the non-federal cost share, coming to agreement on a cost share allocation among the eight Great Lakes states, and acting as the non-federal sponsor for the project; and

Whereas, Congress has recently recognized the national and international economic interest in the project by authorizing, in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, full federal funding of the project; and

Whereas, there is a national interest in reducing the risk of having a single point failure that could cripple the U.S. steel industry, power generation in the mid-continent, and other core industries, a risk that has been perceived as significantly greater in the post-9/11 era, and thus was factored into the Corps’ most recent Limited Reevaluation Report for the project; and

Whereas, some 70 percent of the U.S.-flag fleet’s carrying capacity on the Great Lakes is restricted by size to only the Poe Lock, a volume of cargo tonnage for which there is no alternative transportation mode with sufficient capacity; and

Whereas, events on Sept. 24, 2008, in which a mechanical malfunction of the 40-year old Poe Lock caused an interruption of vessel traffic, demonstrated the heightened risk of having no redundancy at a critical chokepoint in the marine transportation system of vital interest to two countries; and

Whereas, the building of a second large lock at the Soo from two obsolete smaller locks will likely take as long as 10 years from the time it is initiated, thus placing the economy of the United States and Canada in an extended period of risk.

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission urges Congress to act quickly to provide adequate resources to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Soo Lock Expansion Program in 2009 to enable construction and completion of the new lock as soon as possible.