

## Oil Transportation in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Region: Providing a Deeper Understanding For Lawmakers, Agencies, and Industry Leaders

**The development of domestic crude oil in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region has become a central part of energy policies in Canada and the United States.** The movement of crude oil throughout the basin by pipeline, rail, and vessels has become an important driver of the economy. However, the complexity of the crude oil transportation system in the region is reflected by the growing number of issues and concerns about environmental, economic, societal, and health and safety aspects of the industry.

There is an immediate need for regional decision-makers to gain a deepened understanding of the complexities surrounding oil transportation in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region; only through access to unbiased, accurate information will these individuals be able to effectively navigate issues as they arise. The [GLC](#) work on this issue is aimed toward more effectively informing management and policy decisions to better protect the regional economy, the environment, and the health and safety of the public.

In 2015, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) published a report [titled Issues and Trends Surrounding Crude Oil Transportation in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Region](#). The report (and four companion issue briefs) looked broadly at issues related to oil extraction and movement; the economic benefits and disadvantages of oil transportation; risks and impacts; and policies, programs, and legislation being developed to address the issue.

[Three research papers](#) were recently released that focused on key aspects of oil transportation in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region, including the current state of crude oil infrastructure, the economic impact of crude oil transportation, and environmental sensitivity of Great Lakes waters to oil exposure. The papers were commissioned by the GLC through a grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation.

The researchers who authored these papers spoke at a symposium on June 8 and 9, 2017 in Cleveland, Ohio. The symposium entitled "[Crude Move: Oil Transportation Infrastructure, Economics, Risks, Hazards and Lessons Learned](#)" highlighted this research and various other topics related to crude oil transportation in the region and was hosted by the GLC, the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network, Sea Grant state programs from the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, and the International Joint Commission.