



October 20, 2023

Commissioner Troy A. Miller
U.S. Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Commissioner Miller:

TONY EVERS
CHAIR
Governor of Wisconsin

MIKE DEWINE
VICE CHAIR
Governor of Ohio

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor of New York

ERIC HOLCOMB
Governor of Indiana

JB PRITZKER
Governor of Illinois

JOSH SHAPIRO
Governor of Pennsylvania

TIM WALZ
Governor of Minnesota

GRETCHEN WHITMER
Governor of Michigan

DAVID NAFTZGER
Executive Director

The Council of Great Lakes Governors unites the chief executives from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin to grow the region's \$6 trillion economy and protect the world's largest system of surface fresh water.

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Maritime Transportation System connects the American heartland with the Atlantic Ocean and is critical for regional and international trade. The Great Lakes St. Lawrence region is the world's third-largest economy, and its network of 100+ ports facilitates the efficient movement and trade of 400+ million tons of cargo and bulk commodities per year, primarily iron ore, coal and grain. These regional ports contribute over \$30 billion in annual revenue to the region.

The ability to service containerized trade presents a significant opportunity for the region, and the establishment of international container terminals at ports is a significant step toward fostering regional economic development, job creation and trade opportunities. Simultaneously, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Maritime Transportation System is both cost-effective and an environmentally friendly complement to overland transportation. Using the available capacity of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Maritime Transportation System for containerized trade will help reduce congestion and regional carbon emissions while supporting economic development.

Our region's Governors and Premiers have advocated for the expansion of containerized trade in the Great Lakes for many years. The Governors' and Premiers' 2016 Strategy for the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Maritime Transportation System called for the following:

"In order to be better positioned to capitalize on any future container traffic, all levels of government in the region should evaluate and facilitate strategic investments in ports and port infrastructure, and the reduction or removal of regulatory barriers to enable container shipment."

With the support of the Customs and Border Patrol, the Port of Cleveland and the Duluth Seaway Port Authority have seen great success with containers in recent

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years. As the demand for containerized trade continues to grow, it will be important to develop additional container terminals on the Great Lakes. We encourage U.S. Customs & Border Protection to work expeditiously with interested ports to facilitate these essential developments.

The growth of international containerized trade in the region will benefit Great Lakes ports, stimulate economic activity and create jobs around the region. Thank you for your collaboration toward this end.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Naftzger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

David Naftzger
Executive Director
Council of Great Lakes Governors