

**Remarks for
The Honourable Donna
Cansfield,
Minister of Transportation
Marine Club Annual Dinner
6:00 p.m.
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Key messages:

- Sustainable and safe transportation is vital to our economic success and quality of life.
- Marine transportation is part of a multi-modal approach to freight movement.
- Ontario's freight transportation policies are grounded in the view that market forces and competition should drive supply and demand.

Thank you, Roy. [Hickingbottom, First Vice President]

Good evening. I'm delighted to join you this eveningI understand this is your 68th annual dinner. That's quite an accomplishment.

Since becoming Minister of Transportation I have made it my goal to travel as much of this province as possible. I have flown into remote airports ... taken the ferries ... toured a great lakes ship on the Welland Canal ... and I have been to each of our borders. I have seen how transportation touches our lives in so many ways.

The St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes are a huge asset to this region and let me add, they are an under utilized asset. As many of you know, while the movement of goods and services on the Great Lakes is up, it's still only operating at 50 per cent capacity.

As I often say, you have to maximize your assets. You can put over 900 transport trailers on a great lakes ship. That's a lot of trucks off Ontario roads. Think about it.....that does a lot for congestion.

Congestion

The McGuinty government has made easing congestion on our highways and border crossings a priority.

We have invested a record \$1.4 billion in highways this year to tackle traffic congestion, make our roads safer and to keep our economy moving.

Ontario needs the best and most efficient transportation system possible.

There is not one simple answer to traffic congestion. None of us can solve it alone.

Increasingly, the best solutions to the challenge of congestion and bottlenecks must be found in linking our roads and highways with other modes of transportation such as rail, air and marine.

That's why we are committed to working with all transportation partners to create a seamless and integrated system.

I know that many of you here today believe the marine industry can help us ease congestion, enhance trade and improve the environment. My challenge to the marine industry is to find ways to make it a reality. Find ways to work with your potential customers and other modes of transportation to make it happen.

I know that many of you are already working toward this goal.

I am pleased to announce that I'll be setting up an Ontario Marine Advisory Committee. The mandate of this advisory panel will be to put forth the best policies to move Ontario's marine policy agenda forward. I will be asking for your support in the development of the committee.

The McGuinty government recognizes the social, economic and environmental significance of marine transportation in Ontario.

We are exploring the integration of marine transportation into the province's transportation infrastructure ... economic development ... environmental policy ... and investment process.

Sustainable transportation

I feel strongly that we all need to make responsible choices ... as governments ... as industries ... as people.

When we look at solutions to congestion ... keeping goods and people moving safely and efficiently ... they must be *sustainable* solutions.

We all want a clean and healthy environment in which to live, work and raise our children.

Can we continue to only build more highways ... to accommodate more cars ... burn more fuel ... and spew more emissions? No.

Marine shipping is safe ... creates very little noise pollution ... and provides an environmentally sound method of moving goods.

Let me emphasize, our economic prosperity, competitiveness and quality of life depend on our efforts to improve, modernize and integrate our transportation systems – moving goods and services across the province and across our borders.

Fewer vehicles on our roads means we are all spending less time stuck in traffic ... burning less fuel ... and breathing cleaner air.

Transportation policy

Ontario's freight transportation policies are grounded in the view that market forces and competition should drive supply and demand.

We know that 70 per cent of Canada's inter-provincial trade flows through Ontario. More than 40 per cent of Quebec's exports to the US travel through Ontario.

That's why we are committed to working with the federal and Quebec governments on a Gateway and Corridor Strategy similar to the recently announced Asia Pacific Gateway Strategy.

The Asia Pacific Gateway accounts for \$31.2 billion total international trade. That is less than 10 per cent of the trade through Windsor, Niagara, and Sarnia.

I'm proud to say Minister Cannon and I have agreed to work with the Southern Ontario Gateway Council to move forward and tackle congestion in Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

It's clear we need to move forward on a Gateway and Corridor Strategy – taking road, rail and marine transportation into account.

We know that most of the cargo currently being carried by the marine industry comprises bulk commodities – commodities such as grain, iron ore, salt and building materials.

Manufactured goods comprise very little of that cargo. And very little of the current cargo is shipped in containers through the Seaway or in trucks on ferries across the lakes. As I said earlier, you can put 900 containers on a Great Lakes ship.

The marine industry has great potential for transporting manufactured goods in containers to many ports along the Great Lakes including Hamilton, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit and so on.

Ontario's freight transportation policies foster competition within and between modes of transportation ... encourage inter-modal transportation ... and promote safety ... security ... and environmental responsibility.

Ontario Marine Transportation Forum

We are working closely with the marine industry to create a more seamless and integrated transportation system.

Many of you are members of the Ontario Marine Transportation Forum – a coalition of marine carriers, ports and related interests formed two years ago (January 2005).

My ministry is part of this Forum that is reviewing Ontario's marine transportation policies and strategic priorities.

In November, I was pleased to co-chair the Ontario Marine Transportation Summit. Many of you shared your ideas and experiences and recommendations at that summit.

In addition to establishing the Marine Advisory Committee we are taking action on a number of additional items...

- This spring, we plan to meet with Julie Boulet, Quebec Minister for Transport to learn more about her province's approach to intermodal transportation. We also want to explore the possibility of creating a joint federal/provincial North American Gateway and Corridor Strategy, to identify infrastructure investments that will promote goods movement and international trade.
- I will meet with Minister Cannon to discuss the federal government's approach to marine transportation, sustainability and the need for reforms to some of the regulations that negatively affect the competitiveness of our ports, waterways and ships. After all, marine policy is federally regulated and therefore we need Transport Canada's ear.
- We will hold an annual "Ontario Marine Awareness Day" to enhance public awareness and understanding of the marine transportation industry in Ontario.
- We will continue to work with you to find appropriate funding for the Marine Program at Georgian College.
- In late May, the ministry will be hosting a two-day Sustainable Transportation Summit to discuss sustainable transportation policies and how to protect our resources and ensure that we can meet our needs in the future.

Canada's economic prosperity, competitiveness and quality of life depend on improving ... modernizing and integrating transportation – including road, rail and marine.

Conclusion

We need the marine industry to help us reduce highway and border congestion, improve the environment and enhance transportation safety.

As I've said, sustainable transportation means we plan and use our highways more wisely ... encourage people to use public transportation ... explore alternative fuels and technology to reduce emissions ... and make the best possible use of all modes of transportation.

I'd like to close by saying that I look forward to working with our marine partners in the future.

Thank you.