

**Remarks for
The Honourable Donna
Cansfield,
Minister of Transportation
Ontario Marine Transportation
Forum Summit
(opening remarks)
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Key messages:

- Quick, 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.

Good morning. I'm so pleased to join Wayne Smith as a co-host of the first-ever Ontario Marine Transportation Forum Summit. I want to welcome everyone, especially those who have travelled here from outside Ontario.

I'm looking forward to a day of sharing ideas and experiences. Let me assure you I will listen and I'm open to hearing all points of view.

Since becoming Minister of Transportation I have made it my goal to travel as much of this province as possible. I have flown into our 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 us in so many ways.

I can also tell you that the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes are a critical part of Ontario's transportation system.

It is also a fact that our waterways operate significantly below capacity. Highway H20 is 50 per cent underutilized. What does this mean? For starters, empty vessels sailing the Great Lakes could be carrying as many as 900 tractor-trailer containers moving goods to various ports in the American heartland.

Congestion

With this in mind, 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 cut traffic congestion, make our roads safer and help keep our economy moving.

If we could do this, it would go a long way to easing gridlock on Southern Ontario roadways.

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 reduce 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 want you to know that the Ministry of Transportation is committed to working with the Ontario Marine Transportation Forum to review Ontario's marine transportation policies and strategic priorities.

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.

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 tackling 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.

Ontario's transportation policies are aimed at ensuring that we make the best use of all available modes of transport.

For example, 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 about 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, Montreal, 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.

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.

The importance of sustainability is something I have always felt strongly about, and I know my colleagues around the province feel the same way.

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.

As I mentioned earlier, this past summer I had the opportunity to tour a ship passing through the Welland Canal.
[personal observations]

Conclusion

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 welcoming you to today's summit and thanking you in advance for sharing your ideas and your time. I'm pleased my colleague, the Honourable Julie Boulet, the Minister for Transport Quebec will be here this afternoon.

I think we can really accomplish a lot during today's sessions and I look forward to any and all recommendations.

Thank you.