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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
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ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
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When some North American travelers visited England in the late 1800s and commented on the small size of the Thames River, a native named John Burns defended the waterway, saying, "The Saint Lawrence is water, and the Mississippi is muddy water; but that, sir, is liquid history." Now, almost a century later and 25 years after the Seaway officially opened, the Saint Lawrence is liquid history too. For a quarter of a century, the Saint Lawrence has carried the supplies and generated the electricity to sustain the lives of millions.

Today marks the latest scene in a long and colorful historic pageant. Let me reflect for a moment on the history and achievements that offer one of the most important lessons of modern civilization: that national boundaries are no longer national barriers, especially where commerce and culture come together.

This great waterway we call the Saint Lawrence was discovered by Jacques Cartier in the late 16th century. He called it "the great river of Canada." He traveled its length with the help of two young Indians. And the promise just glimpsed by Cartier took centuries to be realized. Only in our own generation did the St. Lawrence achieve its destiny as a great artery of continental transportation.

On May 13, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Wiley-Dondero Act creating the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation. That Act called for Canadian-American cooperation in building a 27-foot deep channel from Lake Erie to the Atlantic Ocean. A New York newspaper reported "a kind of jubilation all along the St. Lawrence Valley when the news broke out that the U. S. (Congress) had voted to join Canada in the seaway project." Some compared it to the building of the pyramids.

When President Eisenhower pledged his country to this historic partnership, he called it the "culmination of the dreams of thousands of individuals on both sides." With understandable pride, he labeled it "another great triumph in peaceful living."

Queen Elizabeth attended the dedication. She called the deepwater seaway, "a magnificent monument to the enduring friendship of two nations."

Today, the Seaway remains all those things and much more.

It is a lifeline 2,300 miles long, reaching from the Atlantic to the heartland of our continent. It provides efficient transportation of food, fuel and raw materials -- cargoes benefiting millions of people around the globe. Eighteen and a half million tons moved through the deepwater Seaway during its first year. Since then annual tonnage has increased two and a half times. At present, annual average tonnage is nearly 50 million tons. Since the Seaway opened it has moved over one billion metric tons of cargo with an estimated value of \$200 billion. That's an important statistic to millions of people whose livelihood depends on this Seaway and the commercial activity it makes possible. Last year the Seaway generated \$3 billion in economic activity for the Great Lakes region. It has been a catalyst and a conduit, inspiring cities along the Great Lakes to expand harbors and extend payrolls in response to shipping growth.

In addition, major manufacturing companies have moved to the international rapids section where they enjoy relatively inexpensive power supplies.

Yet to me, one of the most impressive facts about the Seaway is its ability to pay for itself. Like President Eisenhower's other great transportation initiative -- the Interstate Highway System -- the Seaway is supported directly by those it benefits. From 1959 through 1981 it contributed \$64 million to the Treasury. It has operated since its inception strictly on toll income --without Federal appropriations.

In a broader sense, however, we might all stop to examine an achievement that cannot be measured in dollars or cents, in tonnage shipped or jobs created. The great success of the Saint Lawrence Seaway comes from the willingness of both our nations to work together. As Cartier overcame rapids and shoals, so engineers three centuries later surmounted staggering obstacles, and government leaders surmounted differences to forge an ideal example of international cooperation. I am grateful to the Canadian people and their government for their partnership in this project. The same goes for the Saint Lawrence Seaway Authority of Canada and its devoted employees who supervise the Seaway's operations, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who assist them. Of course, our own people -- the employees of the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation -- hold a very special place in my heart. I'm aware of the outstanding job they do. I know the wonderful support they get from the citizens of Massena. I thank you one and all, and I pledge you my support and that of an Administration committed to policies that stimulate free enterprise, promote competition and make transportation itself continually safer.

But this is not an occasion to look back. We look forward as well. For we seek today to extend the spirit of international partnership, so well represented here, to other forms of maritime activity. I have in mind an issue affecting all of us who value our waterways and despair over the environmental consequences of marine oil spills. For years we have been working to minimize the environmental dangers of oil pollution by assuring adequate financial resources to cover clean-up costs and damages.

While in London last month, I met with Mr. Srivastava, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Our representatives had been meeting with other delegates in an effort to reach agreement on new oil spill liability levels for

vessel owners. The United States had not signed earlier international conventions dealing with oil pollution compensation because their liability limits were too low. My job was to convince the IMO delegates that the Reagan Administration would urge ratification of the conventions if agreement could be reached on more realistic liability levels.

The need to provide for a comprehensive regime of clean-up costs and compensation for damages is an international problem deserving an international solution. The IMO delegates subsequently voted to raise shipowner liability levels and these recommendations virtually assure adequate compensation to cover costs associated with oil spills. The agreement is a very satisfactory international answer to an international problem.

We have been fortunate that there have been no sizable oil spills on the St. Lawrence since 1976. Yet we would shirk our environmental responsibility if we did not take appropriate precautions, both to deter tanker accidents and to cope quickly with spills should they occur.

For years, the Coast Guard has been doing battle against oil pollution in our waters, and producing results. Incidentally, as Secretary of Transportation I also oversee the Coast Guard and have found my little corner of history as the first woman to head a branch of the armed services. I am very proud of the Coast Guard, not only for its work in defense readiness and pollution control, but in boating safety, lifesaving, drug interdiction and many other services. Many who use this Seaway, I'm sure, are indebted to the Coast Guard for its navigation skills, patrol work and search and rescue missions.

Four hundred fifty years ago, Jacques Cartier stood atop the summit of what he called Mount Royal. "East, west, and south," wrote one historian, "the ... forest was overall, and the broad blue ribbon of the great river... . Beyond, to the bounds of Mexico, stretched a leafy desert, and the vast hive of industry, the mighty battle ground of later centuries ... wrapped in woods." How much has changed since then? How much promise has been realized? How much potential remains? In marking the Seaway's silver anniversary, let us rededicate this Seaway as a monument to democracy and free enterprise in its finest hour. Or as President Eisenhower said at the Seaway's inauguration 25 years ago: "May this example be never forgotten by us, and may it never be ignored by others. For in (it) ... rests the single hope for world prosperity and happiness in peace, with justice for all."

Thank you very much.

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