



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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The 1973 navigation season on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System will open on March 28 - the earliest opening date in the history of the 14-year old waterway, according to Claude S. Brinegar, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The announcement followed agreement between the U.S. Seaway Corporation and the Seaway Authority of Canada.

"This early opening of the Seaway is a response to the urgent need for early shipments from the Great Lakes ports. To meet continuing demands on the system, we are stepping up plans for the full development of the Seaway," U.S. Seaway Administrator David W. Oberlin commented.

As a result of favorable weather conditions and improved technology, all of the 2,342 mile waterway - which includes the Montreal-Lake Ontario Section, the Welland Canal Section, and the American locks at Sault Ste. Marie - will be open for navigation at 8:00 a.m. on March 28.

Secretary Brinegar today said, "I am very pleased that the Seaway will be able to respond to the urgent need for additional transportation facilities. At no time in history have we had so serious a situation involving the movement of grain. This Seaway opening should help alleviate this."

During the 1972 navigation season, grain shipments on the Montreal-Lake Ontario section of the Seaway accounted for 47% of all bulk cargo. Total tonnage for 1972 and a new record of 53.6 million tons. This was the third consecutive season when the 50-million ton mark was exceeded.

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Administrator Oberline called the early Seaway opening a great example of the continued cooperation between the United States and Canada as they work jointly to develop contingency plans which will incorporate essential elements to extend the navigation season and to expand world trade.

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