



**PORT OF  
CLEVELAND**

Cleveland - Cuyahoga County Port Authority

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

Contact: Sandra Livingston  
office 216-377-1341; cell 216-650-7204

[www.portofcleveland.com](http://www.portofcleveland.com)

**Port Authority lauds Senators Portman and Stabenow for  
introducing Great Lakes Short Sea Shipping bill**

*Passage could encourage new business opportunities and job growth*

**December 8, 2011** -- The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority applauds Senators Rob Portman of Ohio and Debbie Stabenow of Michigan for today's introduction of the Great Lakes Short Sea Shipping Enhancement Act of 2011, which could spur economic growth by removing a key disincentive to the expansion of regional shipping services on the Great Lakes.

"For us passage of this legislation is highly relevant and vitally important," said Port Authority CEO Will Friedman. "We are grateful to Senators Portman and Stabenow for the interest and the leadership they have shown on this issue, which is all about economic development."

As highway and border congestion impedes the efficient flow of commerce, a number of new shipping services have been proposed on the Great Lakes to better facilitate both domestic and binational trade.

As an example, the Port of Cleveland is working to develop a short-sea container-feeder service between Montreal and Cleveland. It would be the first regularly scheduled container service on Lake Erie and could roughly double the cargo volumes and Longshoremen hours at the Port. Most important, it could provide Port customers with a cost-competitive and faster option for importing and exporting goods and materials.

Several factors are involved in any carrier's decision about whether to start such service. But Friedman said a significant impediment is the U.S. Harbor Maintenance Tax, which, in part, is assessed on cargo transported between U.S. ports, or imported to U.S. ports from other countries.

Because the tax is only assessed on waterborne cargo, it serves as a disincentive to move freight by ship, indirectly placing greater demand on the region's already congested highways. That's a particular concern for our region. Not only do the United States and Canada have the largest bi-national trade relationship in the world, but the majority of the trade takes place in the Great Lakes region.

The bill sponsored by Senators Portman and Stabenow would create a narrow exemption to the Harbor Maintenance Tax for cargo transported through the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System.

"The Great Lakes navigation system operates at only 50 percent of its capacity," said Steve Fisher, Executive Director of the American Great Lakes Ports Association. "With minimal investment, short sea shipping services can complement existing highway and rail transport to relieve congestion and facilitate commerce."

Short Sea Shipping legislation (H.R. 1533) has also been introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Pat Tiberi of Ohio. That bill now enjoys the support of 31 cosponsors, including Ohio Representatives Marcia Fudge, Marcy Kaptur, Dennis Kucinich, Steve LaTourette, and Betty Sutton.

*The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority operates the Port of Cleveland, a leading gateway for waterborne trade on the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway System. Nearly 18,000 jobs and 1.8 billion in economic activity result from the roughly 13 million tons of cargo that move through the Cleveland harbor on average each year. The Port also provides innovative financing services for a wide range of development projects in Northeast Ohio, and is leading initiatives to solve critical infrastructure challenges along Cleveland's waterfronts.*