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Lake Carriers' Association

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GREAT LAKES MARITIME TASK FORCE

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Richard Hammer
Donjon Shipbuilding and Repair

Secretary/Treasurer

Glen G. Nekvasil
Lake Carriers' Association

ONE MARITIME PLAZA – 3RD FLOOR – TOLEDO, OHIO 43604
Phone: (419) 255-3940 • Fax: (419) 255-2350 • www.glmtf.org

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News Release

August 21, 2017

Senator Tammy Baldwin Named 2017 Great Lakes Legislator of the Year

TOLEDO, OH – Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin (D) has been named 2017 Great Lakes Legislator of the Year by the largest labor/management coalition representing shipping on America's Fourth Sea Coast. The award is presented annually by Great Lakes Maritime Task Force (GLMTF) to a legislator who has helped advance waterborne commerce on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway and will be presented at a ceremony at Bay Shipbuilding Company in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, on August 22nd.

“Senator Baldwin’s first term in the Senate has been remarkable for her understanding of and commitment to shipping on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway,” said Brian D. Krus, President of GLMTF in 2017. “Her grasp of the issues, and more importantly, her response to the challenges facing shipping on the Fourth Sea Coast has been instrumental in moving several projects forward.”

Krus, who is also Senior National Assistance Vice President of American Maritime Officers, praised Senator Baldwin’s efforts to build another heavy icebreaker for the Great Lakes. “In 2016 she added \$2 million to begin the design of the icebreaker to the Department of Homeland Security’s appropriations bill. This year she has added \$5 million to the Coast Guard Authorization Act to further design of the new icebreaker.”

“Having adequate U.S. Coast Guard icebreaking resources on the Great Lakes is key to the system meeting the needs of commerce,” said James H.I. Weakley, 1st Vice President of GLMTF. “The ice season begins in early December and can extend well into April.” Weakley, who is also President of Lake Carriers’ Association, noted that the winters of 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 were so severe that the cargos delayed or outright canceled because the U.S. Coast Guard did not have enough icebreaking assets cost the nation nearly 6,000 jobs and \$1.1 billion in economic activity.

(more)

Promoting Shipping on America’s Fourth Sea Coast Since 1992

Senator Baldwin also has a keen interest in international trade to and from the Lakes via the St. Lawrence Seaway. “Superior, Green Bay and Milwaukee are among the leading international ports on the Great Lakes,” said John D. Baker, 2nd Vice President of GLMTF and President Emeritus of the ILA’s Great Lakes District Council. “The cargos longshoremen load and unload in those ports support hundreds jobs in Wisconsin. The Lakes/Seaway system has the capacity to handle more cargo, so there are more jobs to be had if our national policies promote waterborne commerce. Tammy Baldwin understands that and is always looking to advance shipping on our Fourth Sea Coast.”

Shipbuilding is another focus of Senator Baldwin. “Wisconsin is home to two of the largest shipyards on the Great Lakes,” said Richard Hammer, 3rd Vice President. “In a typical winter, more than 1,000 skilled men and women will maintain and modernize the Lakes fleet, an effort that results in more than \$50 million being pumped into the state’s economy.”

Hammer, who is also Assistant General Manager of Donjon Shipbuilding and Repair stressed that Baldwin’s commitment to strong shipyards was recently underscored by her introduction of S. 1100, the Small Shipyards and Maritime Communities Act, which provides assistance for projects that would be effective in fostering efficiency, competitive operations, and quality ship construction, repair, and reconfiguration, as well as projects that promote employee skills and enhance productivity.

With her selection as Great Lakes Legislator of the Year, Senator Baldwin becomes the fourth Wisconsin legislator to receive the award since its inception in 1998. Previous recipients are Senator Ron Johnson (R), Rep. David R. Obey (D) and Rep. Mark Green (R).

Founded in 1992, Great Lakes Maritime Task Force promotes domestic and international shipping on the Great Lakes. With 79 members, it is the largest coalition to ever speak for the Great Lakes shipping community and draws its membership from both labor and management representing U.S.-flag vessel operators, shipboard and longshore unions, port authorities, cargo shippers, terminal operators, shipyards and other Great Lakes interests. Its goals include ensuring Lakes dredging is adequately funded, construction of a second Poe-sized lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, protecting the Jones Act and other U.S. maritime cabotage laws and regulations; maximizing the Lakes overseas trade via the St. Lawrence Seaway; opposing exports and/or increased diversions of Great Lakes water; and expanding short sea shipping on the Lakes.

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For more information contact Glen Nekvasil, Secretary: (440) 333-9996 / E-Mail: info@glmtf.org