AN ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River maritime transportation system links more than 100 U.S. and Canadian ports to the world economy, moves approximately 200 million metric tons of cargo annually, supports more than 325,000 jobs and generates $45 billion in economic activity in the U.S. and Canada, supporting industries such as manufacturing, steel production, agriculture and power generation.

The system is vital for the U.S. and Canadian national economies, with nearly all the iron ore needed for U.S. steel production passing through the Soo Locks, which connect Lake Superior to the other four Great Lakes and the world economy.

In June 2016, the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers released their Strategy for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Maritime Transportation System, which established shared priorities and recommended policies, programs and projects to rejuvenate the regional maritime system. Blue Accounting is building on this effort by tracking progress toward the strategy’s goals to help regional leaders better understand how our actions are strengthening the economic and environmental performance of the maritime transportation system.

TRACKING PROGRESS WITH BLUE ACCOUNTING

For the first time, Blue Accounting is synthesizing U.S., Canadian and private sector data to provide elected leaders and managers with a big-picture view of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River maritime transportation system. Blue Accounting’s information hub (www.blueaccounting.org) makes the data and information open and accessible to decision-makers and stakeholders across the Basin.

With guidance from a work group of U.S. and Canadian maritime leaders, Blue Accounting is tracking progress toward three goals with six key economic and environmental metrics:

**Goal 1: Increase Maritime Traffic and Trade**
- Cargo tonnage
- Growth in cruise tourism
- Cargo Value
- Container cargo volume

**Goal 2: Increase the system’s efficiency and performance**
- Reliability of navigation locks

**Goal 3: Improve the system’s environmental performance**
- Continue improving the environmental performance of the system

In addition to the metrics, Blue Accounting will present a comprehensive summary of strategies for strengthening the maritime transportation system and associated investments from federal and state/provincial agencies and the private sector. This context will help decisionmakers understand the “how” and “why” behind progress in the system. An additional suite of metrics has been identified to develop in the next phase of the project.

LEARN MORE

For more information on Blue Accounting’s maritime transportation project, contact Matt Doss, Policy Director at the Great Lakes Commission, mdoss@glc.org.
Blue Accounting

Blue Accounting, an initiative supported by an online information platform, provides decision-makers with a big picture view of critical Great Lakes issues.

Initially, Blue Accounting is supporting five complex issues:

- **Aquatic Invasive Species**
- **Source Water**
- **Phosphorus Control**
- **Coastal Wetlands**
- **Maritime Transportation**

Working together, we can improve the decisions we make to ensure the Great Lakes will always be the backbone of our region, supplying fresh water and natural beauty and serving as a powerful economic engine.