



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**HARBOR TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Summary**  
 March 5, 2025

Hybrid Meeting held at Northwoods Technical College and Via Microsoft Teams

**HTAC Voting Members**

Present	Name	Organization	Sector Representing
Y	Ed Anderson ( <i>Chair</i> )	MIC Policy Board	Regional Organization
Y	Adam Bechle ( <i>alternate</i> )	WI Sea Grant	Agency
	Dan Belden	Western Lake Superior Sanitary District	Regional Organization
	Cliff Bentley ( <i>alternate</i> )	MN Department of Natural Resources	Agency
	Cameron Bertsch	Douglas County	Local Government
	Brian Boder ( <i>alternate</i> )	St. Louis County	Local Government
	CDR John Botti	US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Duluth	Agency
Y	Dan Breneman ( <i>alternate</i> )	MN Pollution Control Agency	Agency
	Steve Brossart	US Army Corps of Engineers	Agency
	Natalie Chin	WI Sea Grant	Agency
	AJ Clavette ( <i>alternate</i> )	US Customs and Border Patrol	Agency
	John Downing	MN Sea Grant	Agency
	Matti Erpestad	Day Tripper of Duluth	Recreation
Y	LTJG Zach Fedak ( <i>alternate</i> )	US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Duluth	Agency
	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County	Local Government
	James Gittermeier	City of Duluth	Local Government
Y	Gary Glass	Izaak Walton League	Citizen Group
	Cheri Hagen	WI Department of Natural Resources	Agency
	Dan Hartman	DECC	Harbor Tourism
Y	Joe Havasi	Compass Minerals	Harbor Industry
	Barb Huberty	MN Pollution Control Agency	Agency
	Duane Johnson ( <i>alternate</i> )	St Louis County Emergency Management	Local Government
Y	Joel Johnson	Lakehead Boat Basin	Recreation
	Sheldon Johnson ( <i>alternate</i> )	Northwest Regional Planning Commission	Regional Organization
	Brandon Kohlts ( <i>alternate</i> )	WLSSD	Regional Organization
Y	Shawn Krizaj	City of Duluth Fire Department	Local Government
	Rich Laskey ( <i>alternate</i> )	GLF / Key Lakes	Harbor Industry
Y	Jason Laumann	Northwest Regional Planning Commission	Regional Organization
	Robb McGhie	Perkins Specialized Transportation Contracting	Harbor Logistics
Y	Capt. Ed Montgomery	Sea Service LLC	Harbor Industry
	Nick Patterson	JF Brennan	Harbor Industry
Y	Mike Peterson	GLF / Key Lakes	Harbor Industry
Y	Patrick Phenow	MN Department of Transportation	Agency
Y	Kelsey Prihoda ( <i>alternate</i> )	MN Sea Grant	Agency
	Capt. Dan Rentschler ( <i>alternate</i> )	Western Great Lakes Pilots Association	Harbor Industry
Y	Amanda Rosebrock	Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Government
	Jason Serck	City of Superior	Local Government
Y	Mae Sommerfeld	WI Department of Transportation	Agency
	Bri Speldrich	MN Department of Natural Resources	Agency
	Matt Steiger ( <i>alternate</i> )	WI Department of Natural Resources	Agency
	Jeff Udd	Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Regional Organization
	Ashley Vande Voort ( <i>alternate</i> )	Douglas County	Local Government
Y	Lou Weichseldorfer	CN	Harbor Logistics
	Vacant	St. Louis River Alliance	Citizen Group
	Vacant		Harbor Industry
	Vacant		Harbor-related Business
	Vacant		Harbor-related Business



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**Others Present**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Tari Aanonsen	MIC	Seth Johnson	AMI Engineers
Katherine Alexson	US EPA	Tom Killian	DSTA / Boyer Trucks
Ron Chicka	MIC	Kris Laman	USACE
Orion DiFranco	US Senator Smith	Patrick Kelly	
Ken Gerasimos		Jim Miller	US Congressman Tiffany
Timothy Haak		Stacy Oltmanns	Northland Constructors
Michael Halsted	WisDOT	Guy Partch	Barr Engineering
Mike Heckman	DSTA / Blaine Brothers	Daniel Rust	UW-Superior
Lucy Hick	NOAA	Ricky Sarran	MIC
John Hoenig	Barkers Island Marina	Maren Webb	MnDOT
Jayson Hron	Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Mike Wenzholz	MIC

**Introductions / Agenda Review / Committee Business**

**HTAC Chair Ed Anderson** called the meeting to order at approximately 9:10 AM. Ed welcomed everyone to the hybrid HTAC quarterly meeting. Ed asked if there were any concerns with the December 4, 2024, Meeting Summary, and hearing none asked for a motion to approve.

- Joel Johnson moved to approve the 12/4/2024 HTAC Meeting Summary. Gary Glass seconded the motion.
- There was no further discussion.
- **The motion to approve carried unanimously.**

Ed A then turned the meeting facilitation over to Mike Wenzholz. Mike shared a few basic meeting logistics.

Mike announced that this is Ed’s final meeting as Chair. He thanked Ed for serving as Chair since COVID. Mike announced the new Chair is Jeff Udd (Duluth Seaway Port Authority) and the new Vice-Chair is Jason Serck (City of Superior).

Mike acknowledged the announcement that Deb DeLuca, Executive Director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, will be retiring in May. There is nothing more at this meeting because Deb was not able to be at the meeting. We plan to have a more formal thank you at the June meeting.

**Annual MIC Harbor Work Plan Update, Mike Wenzholz, MIC**

- Mike W reminded the group that the HTAC is very important to the MIC. This is demonstrated by the fact the MIC’s harbor-related work has its own work plan, which Mike summarized. He shared several highlights, including
  - The budget for the 2025 Harbor Planning Work Program is \$63,371.



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- The 2025 budget includes 775 staff hours.
- The MIC's Harbor Planning work includes three components: coordination, information exchange, and group facilitation (in essence the quarterly HTAC meetings); HTAC subcommittee coordination and facilitation; and program development and other activities (a diverse list of activities).

## **HTAC Dredging Subcommittee Update & Meeting Summary, Dan Breneman, MPCA**

- Dan B provided a brief summary of recent local dredging topics.
- There was a Dredging Subcommittee meeting in February which included the following topics:
  - Melissa Bosman and Madison Doman of USACE were in-person to introduce the new Duluth-stationed USACE project manager (Nick Thorson), share details of the planned 2025 maintenance dredging in the Duluth-Superior harbor, and to discuss beneficial use of dredge material. Approximately 100,000 – 195,000 cubic yards will be used at Wisconsin Point adjacent to and to fortify the former (closed) City of Superior landfill site. Any additional materials will be brought to Erie Pier. The Beneficial Use Decision Document Integration (BUDDI) is a tool to aid in successfully beneficially using dredged materials.
  - Dan Carlson (USACE) led a discussion of the effort to better arrange and use Erie Pier to improve removal and beneficial use of fine materials. There is currently approximately 400,000 cubic yards of materials at Erie Pier.
  - Kelsey Prihoda provided an overview of the upcoming Beneficial Use Project Sponsor Survey. A separate meeting of the Dredging Subcommittee may be held to consider ways it could assist the project/survey.
- Kris L said the fines contract is looking good to be set soon.
- Dan B mentioned there will be an April 8 webinar of the Great Lakes Dredging Team which will include discussion of PFAS in dredged material and CDF harvesting.

## **Duluth Ship Canal Concerns Work Group Update, Mike Wenholz, MIC**

- See the one-pager
- Mike W shared that the new Duluth Ship Canal Work Group, a work group of the Navigation & Safety Subcommittee held its first meeting. The purpose of this short-term Work Group is to address the following concerns that have been brought up many times over many years and bring them to finality within the Subcommittee and HTAC:
  1. Navigation Aids for commercial & recreational use of the Duluth Ship Canal
  2. Duluth Ship Canal Velocity Sensor
  3. Duluth Ship Canal Portage on Park Point (8<sup>th</sup> Street at Lake Avenue & Minnesota Avenue)
- The following are the proposed actions of the Work Group:
  1. Define the exact issue for each of the 3 topics/concerns.
  2. Identify the desired resolution for each of the 3 topics/concerns.
  3. Identify who has the authority to bring each of the 3 topics/concerns to resolution.
  4. Determine the specific final action(s) the Work Group will take to attempt to resolve each of the 3 topics/concerns. If applicable, identify the steps of each action.
- Actions 1 and 2 were addressed at meeting 1. Meeting 2 is scheduled with the goal to address task 3. The goal is to complete this work within 3-4 meetings.



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## **Navigation & Safety Subcommittee Update, Zach Fedak, US Coast Guard MSU-Duluth**

- Zach F provided a brief summary of some changes to be discussed at the next Navigation & Safety Subcommittee meeting. In short, these changes are necessary to meet recent US Coast Guard NVIC Guidance and for the Navigation & Safety Subcommittee to continue serving its dual role/purpose as HTAC subcommittee and US Coast Guard MSU Harbor Safety Committee, as has been accomplished for many years.
- Mike W added that one of the basic changes is to officially name it the Navigation & Safety Subcommittee. Over the past 8 or more years it has often been referred to as the Navigation Subcommittee.

## **Origins of the Port Authority, Jayson Hron, Duluth Seaway Port Authority**

- See the presentation
- Jayson H provided an excellent and interesting history of the origins of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority. A few highlights include:
  - The idea of creating a deep-draft waterway connecting Duluth-Superior to the Atlantic Ocean dates back to a resolution from a Minnesota US Congressman in 1892, and the International Joint Commission recommended construction of a St. Lawrence Seaway in 1909. However, construction of the Seaway would not begin until 1954 following passage of the Wiley-Dondero Act. The Seaway was completed in 1959, and with it Duluth-Superior became a world port. The Clure Terminal opens on Rice's Point.
  - Minnesota Legislature passed the Port Authority Act in 1929 and the first meeting of the Port Authority of Duluth convened January 24, 1930. Due largely to World War 2 all three members of the Port Authority of Duluth resigned in March 1942. However, following the start of construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1954 the Duluth City Council and Mayor revived the Port Authority, electing Arthur Clure its president.
  - The Interstate Bridge of 1897 was widely disliked by 1933 and a proposal to replace it with a tunnel was given serious consideration. However, in 1934 the US Public Works Administration denied the tunnel plans and it took until 1961 to replace the Interstate Bridge with the Blatnik Bridge.

## **Summary of the 2024 Shipping Season, Jayson Hron, Duluth Seaway Port Authority**

- See the presentation
- Jayson H provided summary of the 2024 shipping season in the Duluth-Superior Port.
- The port had a good shipping year. Some of the highlights include:
  - Overall tonnage decreased 6.8% from 2023, and 4.1% below the five-season average. This was largely due to the 10.4% decrease in iron ore tonnage from 2023. But recall 2023 iron ore tonnage was the highest it had been since 1995.



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- Iron ore comprises approximately half of this port's total tonnage. Iron ore has been the port's primary cargo since 1890
- Most of our port's exports are iron ore. One third of the port's iron ore tonnage in 2024 was sailed to Canada. Canadian trade accounted for a fifth of all waterborne tonnage in 2024.
- There was a 31% year-over-year increase in export tonnage.
- Overseas tonnage comprises 20% of the overall total from this port.
- Limestone is a very versatile commodity that steadily rises in tonnage – 3.4% above 2024 and 4.4% above the five-season average.
- While cement tonnage increased 29% from 2022-2023 it dropped 21.5% in 2024 but is still within 7% of the 5-season average.
- After two seasons of heavy salt tonnage there was a significant reduction in 2024. Salt tonnage is almost entirely from Canada.
- Grain was up 0.5% from 2023, but 22.6% below the 5-season average. As mentioned previously grain tonnage is variable as it is significantly impacted by strength of the dollar, fuel costs, and weather.
- While coal remains in a steep decline of over 25% over the past 19 years, it posted a very modest year-over-year increase in 2024.
- The regular trans-Atlantic monthly liner service started in 2023 expanded in 2024.
- Jayson pointed out that tonnage is not the full story. Less heavy items may be very good financially.
- Wind energy cargoes posted their highest volume since 2020. Departed on rail rather than truck.
- For the second consecutive season, more than 4,000 cruise ship passengers visited Duluth.
- Shipping remains a more energy efficient freight option (compared to truck and rail). DSPA continues to support and promote water-based transportation.
- The Port of Duluth-Superior drives \$1.6 billion in economic activity, moves 33 million short tons of cargo, and supports 7,136 jobs.
- Jayson provided a slide that clearly illustrates the role the port plays in moving goods and materials from all areas of Minnesota, both incoming and outgoing.

## Roundtable

- Ken G reminded the group that the International Ship Masters' Association will hold their Grand Lodge Convention in Duluth January 28 – February 1, 2026.
- Mike W mentioned the City of Superior will be hosting some events this year to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

**With no other items brought forward, Mike Wenholtz adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:54 AM.**