

# The Seaway strike is a hot mess. Canada needs to fix it.

posted by AJOT | Oct 25 2023 at 11:08 AM

## **American Journal of Transportation**

Last Saturday night at midnight, the employees of the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation (SLSMC) went on strike, shutting down Canadian portions of the St. Lawrence Seaway, a binational waterway connecting the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. That night, the flow of commerce through the waterway ceased, resulting in a disruption of trade to our ports, lost jobs in our communities, and millions in economic harm compounding every day.

At our ports, stevedores and longshoremen have no ships to unload, marine pilots are out of work, trucking companies have no deliveries to make, and tugboats are idle. Our customers are making plans now to reroute their products through east coast ports.

Despite these negative impacts, there seems to be no urgency to resolving the strike. The parties did not meet Sunday, nor Monday. They did not meet Tuesday. They have no plans to meet today, nor tomorrow. The casual pace at which the parties and the Canadian Government are approaching the resolution of this crisis is an outrage. It is a slap in the face to the many Americans and Canadians who are suffering job loss.

This is not just any labor dispute; it is a labor dispute affecting an international commercial waterway owned by the Canadian and U.S. Governments and operated in the public interest. While the SLSMC and its union are at the negotiating table, their dispute is negatively effecting hundreds of companies and thousands of people whose livelihood depends on the freight that moves through the waterway. None of these companies have a seat at the table. None of their employees have a voice, yet they suffer.

Despite claims that they are "engaged," the Canadian Labour and Transport Ministers appear to be slow-walking the resolution of this strike. While we don't take sides in the dispute, we do demand that the Government of Canada demonstrate greater urgency in bringing this to an end.

A 2020 economic analysis determined that a two-week closure of the Seaway would result in the loss of more than 19,000 jobs in the United States and Canada. With a week now wasted, and many days of negotiations still pending, these job losses are certain.