AMERICAN
GREAT LAKES PORTS
ASSOCIATION

2026 Position Paper

FUND CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW SOO LOCK

Summary:
Owned and operated by the Army Corps of Engineers, the lock complex at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (Soo Locks) enables ships to navigate the St. Marys River, which connects Lake Superior to the lower four Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Congress has authorized construction of a new large lock at the Soo. The project is currently under construction, and Congress has already appropriated more than $2.2 billion for that purpose. This is the largest project in the history of the Great Lakes and is scheduled to be completed on budget and on time in 2030.

AGLPA Position:
Congress should approve at least $200 million in the FY2027 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill to continue construction of the new navigation lock at Sault Ste. Marie. AGLPA supports efficient funding to keep the project moving forward.

Additional Background:
Owned and operated by the Army Corps of Engineers, the lock complex at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (Soo Locks) enables ships to navigate the St. Marys River, which connects Lake Superior to the lower four Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Although a number of navigation locks have been constructed on the St. Marys River since the 1800s, today the Corps of Engineers maintains two operating locks that lift or lower ships a total of 21 feet. Opened in 1943, the MacArthur Lock measures 800 feet long, 80 feet wide, and 29.5 feet deep. Opened in 1968, the Poe Lock measures 1,200 feet long, 110 feet wide, and 32 feet deep.

Through this critical infrastructure, Great Lakes commercial vessels carry iron ore and other raw materials that feed the nation's steel industry, agricultural products destined for export markets, and low-sulfur coal fueling the region's electric utilities.

Unfortunately, the lock infrastructure is old and in need of repair and replacement. Congress originally authorized construction of a new large lock at Sault Ste. Marie in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. The project was reauthorized in 2007, 2018, and again in 2022 at a total cost of approximately $3.2 billion. The project is currently under construction, and Congress has already appropriated more than $2.2 billion for that purpose.

It is critical for this project to have efficient funding to continue forward.