

From:

**U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood**

**1) Is there the potential for a Marine Highway Program in the United States?**

Never has it been more important to remove barriers to our economy, to reduce our dependency on oil, and mitigate harmful pollutants in the environment. Expanding America's Marine Highway can help advance each of these objectives while creating high paying, long-term American jobs. There is not only growing commercial interest in using the Marine Highway to move freight by water, but Congress has also addressed this issue. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 included a "Short Sea Transportation" section that directs the Secretary of Transportation to "establish a short sea transportation program and designate short sea transportation projects to be conducted under the program to mitigate landside congestion." In response to this legislation, the Department issued an Interim Final Rule in October 2008 and will issue final regulations to implement the program later this year. Additionally, the Maritime Administration's reauthorization gives the Agency the authority to implement a Marine Highway Grant program and the President's budget for 2010 through 2012 includes funding for such a program. While it is yet to be seen if these funds will be appropriated by Congress for 2010, this clearly represents a move by both the Administration and Congress toward such a mechanism to expand our use of Marine Highways where it makes sense.

Properly implemented, this program can help reduce landside congestion. For example, a single vessel can shift over 450 trucks or 225 rail cars from costly and capacity constrained road and rail corridors to our underutilized waterways. Marine Highways can also help reduce oil use. One study shows that inland towing moves each ton of freight nearly three times farther than by truck and almost 40 percent farther than rail on a gallon of fuel. This can also result in environmental benefits. Because inland towing consumes 73 percent less fuel than truck and 28 percent less than rail, it emits proportionally less greenhouse gases.

**2) What are some of the barriers to making MH a reality on a larger scale?**

We are dedicated to systematically removing barriers in order to make better use of the Marine Highway. We will issue a report to Congress in the near future that describes some of these barriers and offers options to address them.

**3) Is MH a part of a National Transportation System?**

Yes, it is a *critical* part of the system. Our approach is to integrate Marine Highways into the overall Surface Transportation System as we implement the new program. This was clearly the intention of Congress in enacting the Energy Independence and Security Act,

which states; “The Secretary shall designate short sea transportation routes as extensions of the surface transportation system to focus public and private efforts to use the waterways to relieve landside congestion along coastal corridors.” Several regions of the country offer particular opportunity in that there are landside corridors with some of our worst congestion with corresponding water routes that could offer some relief. These are the East Coast parallel to the I-95 Corridor, the West Coast parallel to I-5, the Gulf Coast parallel to I-10 and the Great Lakes and Western Rivers corridors, among others.

### **Secretary La Hood’s bio:**

Ray LaHood became the 16th Secretary of Transportation on January 23, 2009.

In nominating him, President-elect Obama said, “Few understand our infrastructure challenge better than the outstanding public servant that I’m asking to lead the Department of Transportation.”

Secretary LaHood’s primary goals in implementing President Obama’s priorities for transportation include safety across all modes, restoring economic health and creating jobs, sustainability – shaping the economy of the coming decades by building new transportation infrastructure, and assuring that transportation policies focus on people who use the transportation system and their communities.

As Secretary of Transportation, LaHood leads an agency with more than 55,000 employees and a \$70 billion budget that oversees air, maritime and surface transportation missions.

Secretary LaHood said he would bring President-elect Obama’s priorities to the Department and see them effectively implemented with a commitment to fairness across regional and party lines and between people who come to the issues with different perspectives.

Before becoming Secretary of Transportation, LaHood served for 14 years in the U.S. House of Representatives from the 18th District of Illinois (from 1995-2009). During that time he served on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and, after that, on the House Appropriations Committee. Prior to his election to the House, he served as Chief of Staff to U.S. Congressman Robert Michel, whom he succeeded in representing the 18th District, and as District Administrative Assistant to Congressman Thomas Railsback. He also served in the Illinois State Legislature.

Before his career in government, Secretary LaHood was a junior high school teacher, having received his degree from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. He was also director of the Rock Island County Youth Services Bureau and Chief planner for the Bi-States Metropolitan Planning Commission in Illinois.

LaHood and his wife, Kathy, have four children (Darin, Amy, Sam, and Sara) and nine grandchildren.