

# FAQ

## 2020 Seaway Navigation Season Opening

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**Mild temperatures and minimal ice cover in the St. Lawrence River is usually a good sign that the commercial navigation season could start relatively early this year. When we experience such favorable weather conditions, when does the Seaway navigation season typically start?**

If we were to focus our attention solely on current favorable weather conditions along the St. Lawrence River, carriers and shippers would anticipate that the Seaway commercial navigation season would begin around March 20th.

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**Persistent high water levels on the Great Lakes could cause flood damage again this year. Would it not be best if outflows above those safe for commercial navigation were maintained such that the Seaway navigation season was delayed after March 31?**

According to the latest forecast data, the maximum outflow benefits to reducing lake levels are achieved through March 31. After March 31, there are no appreciable benefits to increasing outflows by delaying the Seaway opening.

After carefully considering the many complex issues at stake, delaying the opening of the Seaway by 12 days to April 1st is a difficult decision to communicate to our customers but we maintain that it is the reasonable thing to do under the current circumstances. Some will be of the view that 12 lost days of utilization of St. Lawrence Seaway, the most environmentally sustainable mode of transportation to the heartland of North America, is 12 days too many.

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**Are there other measures that commercial navigation can put in place after April 1st that would allow for navigation in the Seaway to safely continue during periods of high Lake Ontario outflows this year?**

We have retained the services of a risk management expert to assist in developing strategies to maintain safe navigation under high Lake Ontario outflows. We are confident that both short and long term solutions to commercial navigation challenges exist that will enable us to maintain our resiliency and predictability for many years to come.

One of the most promising developments so far is the idea that if the International Joint Commission's board frequently adjusts flows to maintain a steady slope (river current) as the water descends the channel, then the ship's captain has a more predictable environment to navigate, even when flows are higher than what was thought possible. With this principle in mind, the potential exists to move more water downstream while, at the same time, safely sustaining commercial navigation.

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In addition, increasing the amount of information available to mariners concerning water currents at precise points in the waterway may assist captains to navigate at higher flows. In addition, the extensive list of safety measures proactively put in place by the Seaway Corporations in 2017 and 2019 can and will be implemented again this year as conditions warrant.

Through innovation and investment, commercial navigation is now more reliable and predictable than ever. Our drive to succeed in partnership with all affected stakeholders shaped the way we serve our customers today. Rest assured, we are continuing to pursue creative solutions to sustain commercial navigation as outflows from Lake Ontario outflows are maximized.

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### **With such favorable weather conditions in the Niagara Region, why are you delaying the opening of the Welland Canal?**

While there will be a delay to the opening of the Montreal to Lake Ontario section, we are pleased to inform our customers that the Welland Canal will open on March 24. We recognize that the Seaway will only be partially opened for a brief period of time but we are confident that this extra time will be put to good use by shippers and carriers eager to start moving cargo as soon as possible this spring.

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### **What are the ramifications of further delaying the Seaway navigation season by a few more weeks beyond April 1?**

A delayed opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway to mid-April would have costly negative impacts for the Great Lakes maritime industry, including ports and the communities they serve, while only providing an incremental reduction in Lake Ontario water levels. Economic analysts have determined that a 4-week delay would result in \$445 million in lost economic activity and over 5,250 jobs adversely affected. There would also be over \$30 million in additional transportation, environmental, social and ship carrier costs.

