



POLICY UPDATE

News and views from the Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce August 21, 1998

Halifax Option is Best Choice For Super-Terminal

Halifax, along with 7 other U.S. ports on the northeastern seaboard, was recently invited by the consortium of Maersk/Sea-Land to submit proposals to create a super container port to serve the needs of these two container lines. Maersk is the largest container line in the world and Sea-Land ranks in the top five.

Of the ports approached by this consortium, the Port of Halifax is the only one located in Canada. The Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce is fully committed to the Halifax option.

The Maersk/Sea-Land proposal is an opportunity to secure a major leap forward for our national transportation system and our international trade links.

The proposal is also a threat to the competitiveness of every Canadian port that services North Atlantic trade. Failing to take advantage of this opportunity will not leave us with the status quo - it will mean instead that our ports will face competition from a new, state-of-the-art, centralized container terminal in the United States; a terminal which will draw valuable clients and critical business away from Halifax and other Canadian ports.

A state-of-the-art terminal in Halifax means increased traffic on Canada's eastern seaboard

and more business opportunities for all eastern Canadian ports.

Centralized service out of a U.S. port means less seaborne traffic in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and more U.S. rail carriers coming up from the Midwest instead of Canadian rail carriers heading south.

We have been working very closely with all concerned stakeholders to ensure that a highly competitive bid was put forward by the Port of Halifax.

Chamber representatives travelled to Ottawa on August 11 as part of a community delegation to meet with representatives of the federal government and discuss the Canada-wide benefits coming out of a successful Halifax bid. This meeting laid the foundation for follow-up meetings the next day by the all-party political delegation from Nova Scotia.

Halifax should be very proud of the level of work and cooperation put into this proposal by all interested parties. All three provincial political parties, several government departments, the Port Corporation, the Port Commission, the Chamber, labour unions and many others have put in countless hours since the request for proposals was first issued in May. It was this kind of non-partisan

community wide effort which saw a strong bid delivered to Maersk/Sea-Land on August 14, 1998.

Our work, however, is not over yet. As Maersk/Sea-Land is reviewing all proposals with a November 1 target decision date, and a short list timeline closer to the end of September, we must all continue to work together to sell the Halifax bid to Maersk/Sea-Land.

From Halifax's perspective, we must continue to be aggressive in selling the Halifax option to Maersk/Sea-Land. We should also be looking at other container lines and considering how we can start talks with them about the possibility of following Maersk/Sea-Land to Halifax or bringing their own centralized services to our port.

Halifax is the right choice. We know it and our bid demonstrates it. Now we need to make sure Maersk/Sea-Land and other container lines remember it.

Editor's Note: We would like to take this opportunity to thank all Chamber members who have worked so hard to coordinate the Chamber's efforts in support of the Halifax option, as well as those who have written us to express their support for the Halifax bid.