



ST. LAWRENCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Chantal Rouleau **Mandated Minister of Transports** **Gouvernement du Québec**



Chantal Rouleau's commitment to the St. Lawrence dates from more than a decade. From 2002 to 2008, she was active in the St. Lawrence River clean-up project in Montreal's East End and in developing sites allowing public riverbank access. In recognition of the project's success, in 2008, Canadian Geographic awarded her the Canadian Environment Award in the Community Action category.

Her love of the St. Lawrence River led her to enter politics in June 2010, when she became Mayor of the Rivière-des-Prairies – Pointe-aux-Trembles borough. She was re-elected in November 2013 and became a member of Ville de Montréal's Executive Committee, where she was responsible for water and water infrastructures.

In October 2018, she was elected to the Québec government. As Minister for Transport, she was mandated to propose a maritime vision reflecting the needs of the industry and waterfront communities. In June 2021, she unveiled Advantage St. Lawrence, the brand-new maritime strategy, which strives to make the St. Lawrence River a prosperous economic corridor while respecting ecosystems. Since then, she has been firmly committed to implementing this strategy while supporting the various actors in their projects to make Québec a leader in the blue economy.

Question 1 : The maritime vision Advantage St. Lawrence, which you presented in June 2021, emphasizes maritime transport, among others, through government programs aimed at repairing and modernizing port infrastructures. In your opinion, is our port network modern and resilient? Why focus on this type of program in the context of a government strategy?

Answer 1 : Québec's strategic port network comprises some 20 ports located along the Gulf of St. Lawrence and St. Lawrence River.

Most of these ports necessitate considerable outlays since they are among the oldest in Canada and since there has been a significant lack of investment in them in recent decades.

This is one of the reasons why, in 2018, the Québec government acquired the Matane, Rimouski, Gaspé and Gros-Cacouna port facilities.

With Advantage St. Lawrence, your government intends to go further and plans to make the St. Lawrence one of the most efficient economic corridors in North America, upgrading and modernizing its port facilities and making them more resilient.

As we all know, the competitiveness of all supply chains is linked, first and foremost, to ports' ability to quickly and

effectively handle and redirect cargo. To do so, they require suitable facilities and infrastructures.

This is why our vision of maritime development, through Advantage St. Lawrence, strives to accelerate the investments needed to fund projects to upgrade and optimize maritime and port infrastructures.

We want to give the St. Lawrence a safe, functional, thriving port network. To do so, we need significant financial mobilization and commitments from both the private and public sectors, including the federal government.

Question 2 : In April 2018, the International Maritime Organization set itself the goal of gradually eliminating GHG emissions resulting from international maritime transport by reducing CO2 emissions by at least 40% by 2030 and by reducing the total volume of annual GHG emissions by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008 levels. What contribution can the Québec government make to support the maritime industry in this willingness to innovate and turn to technologies allowing it to reduce its environmental footprint?

Answer 2 : In January 2022, the Marine Industry Forum created the task force on climate change and marine industry decarbonization mandated to



further deliberations on the feasibility of implementing green solutions.

Already, the use of fuels of the future like hydrogen, ethanol, biofuel and liquefied natural gas are plausible options. The same is true for electrical shore-to-ship power solutions, which are already being deployed in some of our ports and which should become mainstream, given our hydroelectrical potential.

To underpin these initiatives, the Ministère des Transports (MTQ) will soon be offering the Programme en efficacité du transport maritime, aérien et ferroviaire (Maritime, air and rail transport efficiency program), with a \$40.1 M budget over five years under the Plan for a Green Economy. Further, with Advantage St. Lawrence, in the context of the smart economic corridor, technological projects will be able to help us achieve our environmental targets.

It is also important to remember that maritime transport already posts a positive environmental performance, be it through the above-mentioned work and initiatives or because of the energy efficiency advantages it offers. For one tonne of cargo transported per kilometer, rail and truck transport respectively emit 22% and 450% more GHGs than their maritime counterpart. Given Québec's geography and size, we would do well to increase the use of maritime transport within our borders.

Finally, I would like to highlight the efforts of Green Marine and its members since 2007. This voluntary marine industry environmental certification program targets continuous improvement, excellence and environmental leadership. The success of this organization, created here in Québec, is worthy of mention and clearly shows the industry's willingness to improve its practices.

Question 3 : The smart economic corridor's (SEC) development and implementation play a central role in the latest maritime vision. With government funding of \$24.1M and an anticipated \$175M contribution from the maritime industry and other government players, what should the short-, medium- and long-term action priorities be to ensure this corridor's success?

Answer 3 : Four priorities have been identified to ensure the SEC's success:

Priority 1) Set up multipartite governance to ensure that the project meets user needs.

Stakeholders must rally together and arrive at a common understanding and priority action guidelines.

This is why we have announced the creation of a Québec smart economic corridor roundtable that will enable us to coordinate our actions effectively.

Priority 2) Create trust to promote data sharing.

The SEC will ensure the implementation of technological solutions that will help increase the maritime transport sector's competitiveness and reduce its environmental footprint.

At the same time, the MTQ will support background work aimed at implementing a concerted data-sharing approach able to promote innovation while respecting the features specific to private industry.

Priority 3 : Develop technological tools using artificial intelligence to optimize port operations and shipping routes.

By 2025, we hope that concrete technological solutions will have been implemented and that we will already be seeing gains. The industry and partners are aware of the importance of technological conversion. Québec is a leader in AI and has all of the assets needed to ensure intelligent navigation on the St. Lawrence River and to optimize our port operations. I am very optimistic that we will succeed.

Priority 4 : Extend the use of these tools to the entire logistics chain so as to benefit from efficiency gains and increase Québec's competitiveness.

The SEC is a project that will mature in 10 to 15 years. It is reasonable to believe

that it will affect a wide range of activities occurring on the St. Lawrence as well as the various logistics chain components.

Question 4 : Be it AI, robotics or autonomous vessels, education and employment experts agree that 85% of the jobs of 2030 do not yet exist. The maritime industry must start preparing for this now. However, it faces administrative and regulatory challenges that directly impact the hiring and retention of qualified workers. In your opinion, what actions should be taken in the short, medium and long terms to prepare for the imminent onset of these occupations of the future?

Answer 4 : Over the course of the past year, I have reiterated my concern over the human resources shortage in the maritime sector. This issue is critical for the industry and the entire goods and services supply chain.

My colleague Jean Boulet, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity (MTESS), and I have requested that the Table de concertation sur l'adéquation formation-emploi du secteur maritime (Roundtable on matching training and employment in the maritime sector) be reactivated to enable us to find concrete solutions to this challenge.

The roundtable's work will be directed at continuing education, regulatory training,



promoting the maritime sector and immigration.

My colleague, Jean Boulet, who is also Minister of Immigration, Francization and Integration, is aware that immigration could mitigate the short-term effects of the worker shortage. So, we are open to working with the industry and other federal government partners to facilitate administrative processes and processes linked to recognizing foreign seafarers' acquired skills.

In the medium and long terms, we will definitely need to adapt training programs to the new practices dictated, among others, by the increased use of new technologies. In this area, too, innovation

will have to play a key role and I am certain that the work related to the smart economic corridor will be able to guide us in this respect.

Developing new skills is definitely necessary if the industry wants to meet the challenges it will increasingly have to face in terms of digital conversion and energy transition.

Finally, it goes without saying that promoting maritime careers remains crucial for your activity sector. Misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about career prospects in the maritime/port sector impede its growth. Ongoing efforts will be required in this regard the coming years.

The Ministère des Transports du Québec, Québec's transport department, develops policies related to transportation services, networks and systems and proposes them to the Québec government to ensure the safe, sustainable mobility of people and goods, thereby contributing to Québec's development.

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