

STRATURE

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THEME BRIEF · THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE · EXECUTIVE READ · ARCHIVE EDITION

Is the Northwest Passage becoming a shipping lane?

6 commercial

Not on the published record: 6 of the 35 full transits in 2025 were commercial, and Canada publishes no Arctic icebreaking fee, so the Coast Guard sells no Arctic escort slot.

35 transits, 2025

5.2% deep-draft

0 of 3 Arctic fee zones

Signed for and on behalf of the corporation: **Milad Naeimi · Principal** · Strature Geopolitical Prospects & Strategy Inc., Toronto · Edition 1.0 (archive) · 30 September 2026 · Evidence to 30 September 2026 · Facts refreshed 30 September 2026 · Free preview for general circulation; the full brief is sold under Strature's terms.

Archive edition. Researched 3 September 2026; harmonised to the current house standard 30 September 2026.

6 of 35	5.2%	0 of 3	2004
full transits in 2025 were in the commercial category	of 465 transits since 1906 used a deep-draft route	Coast Guard icebreaking fee zones are in the Arctic	last update of the hull market's Arctic area sheet

THE ANSWER

The Northwest Passage is not becoming a shipping lane on the published record. In the 2025 season 35 ships completed a full transit and 6 were in the publisher's commercial category; the commercial count reached ten only in 2023 and 2024 (Robert Headland and colleagues, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, revised 1 Nov 2025, re-read 30 Sep 2026).

The binding gap is serviceability. None of the Coast Guard's three icebreaking fee zones is Arctic, so the Coast Guard sells no Arctic escort slot; the hull market's area sheets date from 2004 and 2006 (read 30 Sep 2026).

FINDINGS

The through traffic is small. 35 full transits in 2025, 6 commercial; 56 of 465 since 1906 carried cargo or fuel, 48 in Wagenborg vessels.	The deep routes are the unused ones. The two deep-draft routes carried 24 of 465 transits (5.2%); the 6.4-metre Simpson Strait routes carried 188.
No Coast Guard escort is for sale. Canada's icebreaking fee applies in three southern zones only; the Coast Guard reported 40 commercial escorts in its 2025 Arctic season.	The reporting rule is new. SOR/2025-275 replaced NORDREG on 31 Mar 2026; report content is set by a Coast Guard publication amended from time to time.

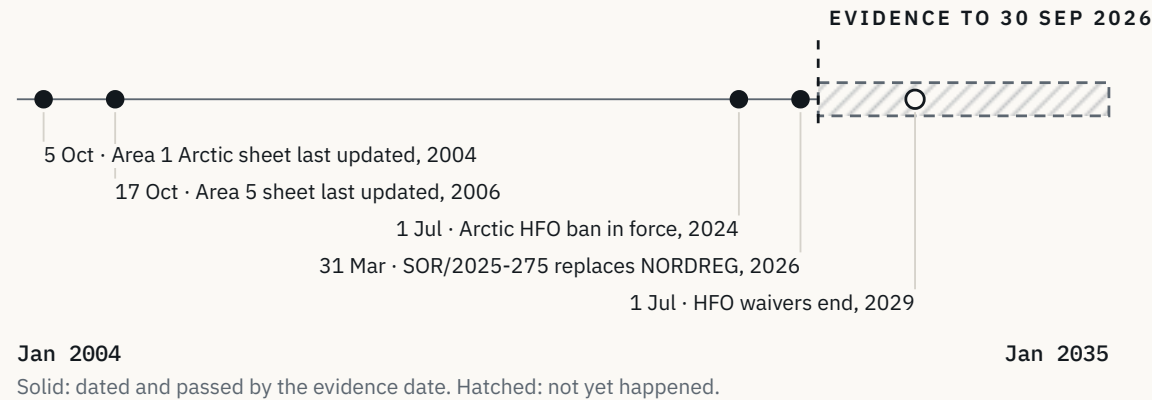
The hull guidance is older than every rule that now governs the water

N4 · NORTHWEST PASSAGE

EXHIBIT N4 · FORM: DATED TIMELINE · EVIDENCE GRADE B

The hull guidance is older than every rule that now governs the water

Dated changes to the rules on a Northwest Passage voyage · Oct 2004 to Jul 2029, axis to 2035 · LMA, IMO, Transport Canada



THE READING

Both area sheets predate the Arctic fuel ban and the 2026 reporting rule; the one fixed date ahead is the end of the fuel-ban waivers in July 2029.

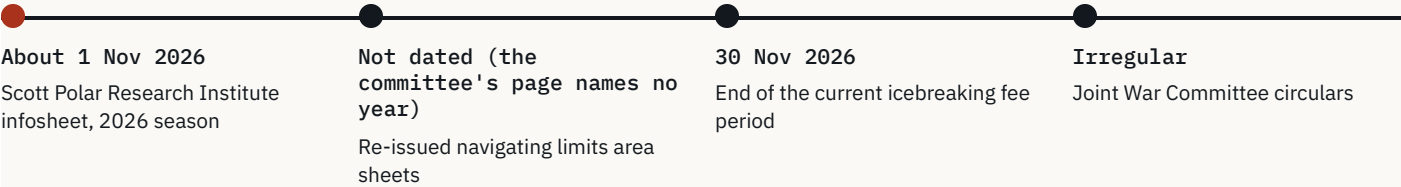
DENOMINATOR Dated events only; no quantity is drawn.	EVIDENCE GRADE B · published work, or a primary text counted by us
SOURCES LMA Navigating Limits Sub-Committee, Area 1 - Arctic guidance, read 30 Sep 2026; LMA Navigating Limits Sub-Committee, Area 5 - North America East guidance, read 30 Sep 2026; MARPOL Annex I reg. 43A, IMO resolution MEPC.329(76), as reported (source edition, 3 Sep 2026); Transport Canada SSB 06/2026; Justice Laws SOR/2025-275, read 30 Sep 2026; MARPOL Annex I reg. 43A, as reported	HOW TO READ THIS PLATE Solid marks are dated and passed by 30 Sep 2026; the hatched band has not yet happened. THE ACCENT: NONE

What would change it

No forecast is printed: the source's seven registered scenario weights are not yet sealed. None is printed unless the brief lane seals it, and a sealed weight would carry both its issue and seal dates. Four dated sources would show first whether the reading holds: the transit infosheet's next revision (about 1 Nov), the re-issued hull area sheets, the Coast Guard fee schedule after 30 Nov 2026, and the fuel-ban waiver end on 1 Jul 2029.

The reading would be wrong if the commercial count reached ten or more in a season while a published Arctic escort tariff or a scheduled escort product existed.

THE NEXT SIGNPOSTS



Options to consider

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The first option concerns insurers and the market bodies that keep area guidance; the third concerns developers of projects in the Nunavut Settlement Area and describes their schedule, not any decision of an Inuit organisation.

OPTIONS THAT HOLD WHICHEVER WAY THE TRAFFIC MOVES

- 1 Warranty wording.** Hull insurers could consider reviewing Canadian Arctic reporting warranties against SOR/2025-275, which points to a Coast Guard publication amended from time to time. Signpost: the re-issued area sheets appear.
- 2 Voyage costing.** Shipowners and charterers might weigh costing a transit with no assumed escort slot, since no Arctic icebreaking tariff is published. Signpost: an Arctic fee zone appears in the schedule.
- 3 Project schedules.** Developers of projects in the Nunavut Settlement Area could consider carrying Article 12 screening and, for a Major Development Project, the Article 26 benefits agreement as schedule items from the outset. Signpost: a project enters screening.
- 4 Fuel planning.** Operators still relying on an Arctic fuel-ban waiver or deferral could consider planning fuel supply for 1 July 2029. Signpost: IMO documents on the 2029 date.

WHAT THIS BRIEF CANNOT ESTABLISH

The 2026 season's transit count, any ice-class newbuild premium, held-covered hull rates, and the penalty amounts under SOR/2025-275.

SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE CORPORATION

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Headline facts and every number on the one-page sheet and the executive read were re-checked against current public sources and re-cited on 30 September 2026. Deeper figures in the full brief keep their original research

date, stamped where they appear.

Named parties and readers may send corrections to corrections@geopoliticalgps.com. We correct errors in the next edition and list them in its change log.

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