

Freight Rail

MOVING THE ECONOMY MITIGATING POLLUTION KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE

Investing in the rail network boosts the nation's economy.

Supporting a healthy freight rail network is key to continued economic recovery. Freight rail is one of the country's most essential industries, and it provides a foundation on which many other industries rely.

- America's freight railroads operate almost exclusively on infrastructure they own, build, maintain and pay for themselves — a vast network of 140,000 miles (enough rail to circle the earth nearly six times), 28,000 locomotives and 1.6 million rail cars.
- Since 1981, railroads have spent approximately \$660 billion of their own funds on locomotives, freight cars, tracks, bridges, tunnels and other equipment and technology to keep the economy moving.
- In recent years, America's freight railroads have spent an average of \$26 billion annually to sustain and enhance their nationwide network - more than most state departments of transportation spend on highways.
- A Towson University Regional Economic Studies Institute (RESI) study estimates that freight railroads supported nearly 1.5 million jobs across the country in 2014.

Freight rail is the engine to keep our economy strong.

Affordable and efficient transportation is critical to our economy. Freight rail provides a vital link for millions of American jobs — connecting farmers, miners and manufacturers to markets across the country and around the world.

- From the food on our tables to the cars we drive to the shoes on our feet, railroads account for over 40 percent of the nation's intercity freight volume — more than any other transportation mode.
- Railroads haul approximately one-third of all U.S. exports, enabling American businesses to be more competitive in the global economy.
- Unlike other modes that operate using infrastructure funded mainly by taxpayers, privately owned freight railroads operate almost exclusively on infrastructure they own, build, maintain and pay for themselves.

FAST FACTS: RAIL INVESTMENTS BENEFIT AMERICANS

- Average rail rates, adjusted for inflation, are 45 percent lower than in 1981. That means the average rail shipper can move nearly twice as much freight today for the same price it paid 35 years ago.
- A Towson University study indicates that every freight rail job sustained another nine jobs across the economy in 2014.
- A few years ago, AASHTO estimated that if all freight traffic were shifted to trucks, transportation costs would jump by almost \$69 billion a year. Adjusted for increased freight volume and inflation, that figure is probably closer to \$100 billion per year today.
- Based on the three most common safety measures used by the Federal Railroad Administration — train accident rates, employee injury rates and grade crossing collision rates — recent years have been the safest in rail history.



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Conserving fuel, mitigating pollution.

Freight rail is the cleanest, most efficient, and most environmentally sound way to move freight over land.

- One freight train can move a ton of freight nearly 500 miles on a single gallon of fuel.
- Railroads are, on average, four times more fuel efficient than trucks. Moving freight by rail instead of truck lowers greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent.
- Freight rail accounts for less than one percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S., according to the EPA — even though freight trains account for over 40 percent of intercity freight.
- One train can carry the freight of several hundred trucks — reducing highway gridlock, the cost of maintaining existing highways and the pressure to build expensive new highways.
- Since 1980, freight railroads have nearly doubled the amount of freight moved while using about the same amount of fuel.

Keeping communities safe.

There is a direct correlation between the increase in rail network investments and enhanced safety performance.

- The train accident rate has fallen 42 percent since 2000.
- Railroads rely on technologies including sonar, infrared and ultrasound to monitor the condition of passing trains and the track beneath them while drones assist in bridge inspection and extreme weather incidents.
- Intelligent sensors positioned across the rail network gather data on the components of 1.6 million rail cars. Analysis of these data sets allows railroads to move beyond simply detecting existing safety issues to predicting and preventing them.
- Since 2008, freight railroads have worked closely with the federal government and passenger railroads to implement positive train control (PTC) — a set of highly advanced technologies designed to automatically stop a train before certain accidents occur.
- By December 31, 2018, Class I railroads will have completed PTC installation and be operating the technology on approximately 80 percent of their PTC mileage, meeting all statutory requirements.
- Railroads work closely with state and local leaders and emergency responders around the country to ensure that communities understand how railroads operate and are prepared in the event of an accident.

FAST FACTS: RAILROADS PROVIDE WELL-PAYING JOBS

- Freight railroads employ about 169,000 highly skilled workers.
- The average full-time railroad worker in 2015 earned wages and benefits of \$121,000. The average U.S. employee saw average annual compensation of \$73,000 — 60 percent of the average railroader.
- Railroads are routinely listed as top “military-friendly employers,” as nearly a quarter of railroad employees are veterans.



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