

Freight Railroads = Less Highway Gridlock

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

MAY 2009

Summary

More freight moving by rail would mean **less highway gridlock** and **easier travel** for motorists. Railroads are the environmentally-responsible way to meet our nation's freight transportation challenges, fight highway overcrowding, and help reduce the need to build costly new highways.

- Because a freight train can do the work of **280 or more trucks**, railroads help fight highway gridlock. In a very real way, freight rail gives back one of the most valuable assets of all — time.
- Railroads also **reduce the huge economic costs** of highway gridlock. According to the Texas Transportation Institute's (TTI) 2007 Urban Mobility Report, highway congestion in the United States already costs us **\$78 billion** just in wasted travel time (4.2 billion hours) and wasted fuel (2.9 billion gallons) every year. Lost productivity, cargo delays, and other costs add tens of billions of dollars to this tab.
- **Relief** for highway gridlock is **right in front of us** — but it's not on the highway. Building and maintaining highways has always been terribly expensive, and highway construction and maintenance costs have soared even higher in recent years. Today, in fact, it can easily cost **\$15 million** (and often **much** more) and well over a decade just to add a lane to **a mile of highway** — compared to \$2 million to \$4 million and relatively little time for a typical mile of rail line.
- Shifting freight from trucks to rail **reduces** the pressure to build costly new roads and helps **cut the costs** of maintaining the roads we already have.

