Look around you. Freight rail is a crucial part of an integrated network of trains, trucks and barges that ships around 54 tons of goods per American every year. Nearly everything you own or interact with once rode the rails, from the lumber in your house to the food on your table to the car in your driveway and the tablet in your hands.

You may also be one of the millions of people who rely on passenger trains to get to work so they can afford to buy those goods. Many commuters travel on freight rail lines. Outside the Northeast Corridor, most Amtrak trains operate on tracks owned by freight railroads, as do most commuter railroads.

U.S. railroads’ safe, efficient and environmentally friendly service makes it the best in the world. In fact, without an efficient rail network, U.S. industries would incur higher costs, and those costs would be passed to you as higher prices on the goods you use every day.

And its railroads — not taxpayers — that pay to maintain and modernize the nearly 140,000-mile rail network.

- **Extreme MPG:** One train, on average, can move one ton more than 470 miles on one gallon of fuel. Mileage like that cuts harmful greenhouse gas emissions, letting us all breathe a little easier. In fact, moving freight by rail instead of truck lowers greenhouse gas emissions by 75%.

- **Energy Savings:** By efficiently delivering the energy sources that power America, such as coal, natural gas and crude oil, freight rail helps keep prices low so we can heat our homes, power our electronics and drive our cars. In fact, railroads haul nearly 70% of U.S. coal to its destination — enough to power 78% of American homes.

- **Delivering Jobs:** Railroads employ roughly 165,000 people — 82% of which are unionized — earning $125,400 per year on average in total compensation. Through collective bargaining, the industry works with labor to forge healthcare, retirement and compensation packages ranked in the top 5% of U.S. industries.

- **Feeding the Nation:** Special refrigerated cold cars, whose meticulously calibrated temperatures are dictated by the delicate produce they haul, deliver the food to your table. Fine wines made from Oregon grapes, crisp apples from New York orchards, Wisconsin’s famous cheddar cheese and Coho salmon from the chilly waters of Washington State — rail moves all of them swiftly to us, fresh and affordable. In 2017, U.S. Class I railroads moved 1.6 million carloads of farm products alone.

- **Saving You Money:** Railroads are responsible for building and maintaining their own equipment and nationwide infrastructure, so their annual private investments cost the American taxpayer nothing. In fact, railroads spend an average of $25 billion annually on infrastructure and equipment to maintain and modernize their 140,000-mile network.