Freight Rail & Forest Products: 
America’s Forests Provide More than Places to Hike, Camp & Relax

Freight railroads efficiently move myriad modern-day necessities that are produced from our nation’s bountiful woodlands.

One-third of the U.S. is forested, a sprawling 766 million acres. So, it’s no surprise that forest products are essential to our everyday life and have nearly limitless uses: wood to build our homes; writing paper to facilitate our education system and packaging to get products to customers safely. Freight railroads efficiently move more than a million carloads of forest and paper products each year.

The movement of forest products like lumber has long been a bellwether for the American economy. Freight rail movements are largely dependent on the demand for the products railroads haul. Data indicates there is a strong correlation between freight rail lumber movements and housing starts, a critical indicator of economic strength. Freight rail is uniquely positioned and committed to delivering the lumber that builds the American dream.

In 2018, U.S. Class I railroads moved 1.2 million carloads of lumber and paper products.

- **Lumber**: According to the Department of Commerce, the value of U.S. lumber and wood production is around $100 billion per year. In 2016, U.S. Class I railroads moved 103 million tons of lumber and wood products, including milled lumber and other construction panels.

- **Pulp & Paper**: The U.S. paper and related products industry is a global leader, with an annual output valued at around $180 billion. In a typical year, America’s freight railroads carry more than 800,000 carloads of pulp and paper products all around the country.