

# Freight Rail & Forest Products: America's Forests Provide Much 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 751 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 indicate there is an 89% correlation between freight rail lumber movements and housing starts, a critical indicator of economic strength. The U.S. housing market currently maintains the strongest home sales in a decade and shows no signs of slowing. Freight rail is uniquely positioned and committed to delivering the lumber that builds the American dream.

Freight rail is a key transportation link for pulp, paper, packaging, tissue and wood products. According to the American Forest & Paper Association, freight railroads move 33 million tons of forest products annually in the U.S.

**Current Stats:** In 2017, U.S. Class I railroads terminated 1.2 million carloads of forest products, lumber and wood, and pulp and paper products (about 4% of total U.S. rail carloads), carrying 72.2 million tons (about 4% of total U.S. terminated tons) and earning gross revenue of \$4.2 billion (6% of total revenue).

**Economic Impact:** Private working forests in the U.S. generate an average of \$102 billion in economic output and support 2.5 million jobs across the U.S. Specialized equipment and operating procedures make freight rail the ideal transportation partner for the forest and paper industry.

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## At a Glance

- **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.