

Freight Railroads Embrace Sustainability & Environmental Preservation

Privately owned freight railroads are the most sustainable way to move freight over land. Moving freight by rail instead of truck lowers greenhouse gas emissions by 75%.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data show freight railroads account for only 0.6% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and only 2.0% of the transportation-related sources, while accounting for well over one-third of intercity freight ton-miles.

Government and businesses must work together to innovate and enact policies that address sustainability — including incentivizing shippers to move freight by rail.

Fuel Efficient Mode: Freight rail is ahead of other land modes of surface transportation when it comes to limiting its carbon footprint. U.S. freight railroads, on average, move one ton of freight 479 miles per gallon of fuel.

Sustainable Choice: If just 10% of the freight moved by the largest trucks moved by rail instead, fuel savings would be more than 1.5 billion gallons per year and annual greenhouse gas emissions would fall by more than 17 million tons — equivalent to removing 3.2 million cars from the highways for a year or planting 400 million trees.

Holistic Approach: From advanced locomotive technology to zero-emission cranes, freight railroads leverage technology in all aspects of their operations to limit their impact on the environment. In 2017 alone, U.S. freight railroads consumed 732 million fewer gallons of fuel and emitted 8.2 million fewer tons of carbon dioxide than they would have if their fuel efficiency had remained constant since 2000.

