Whether selling and building automobiles and houses, powering businesses or enabling manufacturers to reach new customers, American industries rely on freight rail to get raw goods and products to market in the U.S. and beyond. The net impact is profound, with railroads triggering a powerful economic effect across myriad U.S. industries. Railroads make consistently high investments, and the results are impressive:

- High-paying industry jobs.
- Additional industry-supported jobs.
- Industry and consumer connection to the global market.
- Local community growth from sizeable funds infused into the market and government budgets.

These benefits come at a savings of billions of dollars each year for taxpayers because America’s freight railroads operate overwhelmingly on infrastructure that they own, build, maintain and pay for themselves.

- **Private Investments**: From 1980 to 2018, America’s freight railroads spent more than $710 billion — of their own funds, not government funds — on capital expenditures and maintenance expenses related to locomotives, freight cars, tracks, bridges, tunnels and other infrastructure and equipment. That is more than 40 cents out of every revenue dollar.

- **International Trade**: Railroads haul approximately 35% of all U.S. exports, allowing American industry to be more competitive in the worldwide economy.

- **Jobs**: Freight railroads have approximately 150,000 employees. In 2018, Class I freight rail employee compensation, including benefits, averaged approximately $130,200 per year, 61% more than the average U.S. employee.

- **Infrastructure**: With a single train hauling several hundred truckloads worth of freight, U.S. freight railroads’ infrastructure eases the burden on the nation’s overcrowded highways — and the taxpayers who support them.

- **Smart Policies**: Smart public policy allows railroads to invest in the rail network and meet the needs of a changing marketplace.