America’s privately owned freight railroads are the most productive and cost-effective in the world, connecting consumers and businesses across the country and the world while benefitting the environment and promoting safety.

**Freight Rail Works for America**

**Critical For the Economy:** Every year, railroads save American consumers billions of dollars thanks to their safety, reliability, and cost-effectiveness. Millions of Americans work in industries that are more competitive in the tough global economy thanks to the affordability and productivity of America’s freight railroads.

**Safe:** Freight railroads are the safest way to move goods over land and are dedicated to making their networks even safer. Thanks in part to ongoing investments in their networks, employees, technology and communities, the last decade was the safest ever for U.S. railroads, with the hazmat accident and employee injury rates at an all-time low.

**Future Focused:** Technology is the digital infrastructure that powers America’s freight rail network, creating a world-class transportation system that moves the economy forward. Freight railroads use technology every moment of the day to keep employees, communities, infrastructure and equipment safe while improving customer service and decreasing the industry’s carbon footprint. Thanks in part to these technologies, the train accident rate is down 28% since 2000.

**Sustainable:** Thanks to targeted investments, innovative technology and evolving operations, railroads are the most fuel-efficient way to move freight over land. Railroads want to be — and must be — a part of the solution to climate change. With policies grounded in data that encourage innovation, leverage market-based competition and allow for varied approaches among multiple stakeholders, freight railroads will deliver a more sustainable future for all.

**Trade Connector:** From the car you drive to the food you eat, American life is made possible by domestic and international trade. This trade depends on manufacturing and creating goods and services, transporting them to market and then selling them via various retail means — in person or electronically. By linking businesses to each other here and abroad, freight railroads play a crucial role in America’s economic development and modern way of life.

**Vital Employer:** Freight rail employees are highly skilled professionals who are among the best-compensated workers in the nation. In 2020, Class I freight rail employee compensation, including benefits, averaged about $135,700 per year. Freight railroads are committed to safeguarding their workforce and invest in training and new technologies to help make sure railroaders go home safely. The freight rail employee injury rate is lower than in most other industries and is at an all-time low.
Freight Rail Works for You

**Auto:** Cars, trucks and motorcycles ride the rails before they ever hit the road — as raw materials, auto parts and fully assembled vehicles. To accommodate the needs of automakers, we developed a flexible rail car, adjustable to two or three levels based on the manufacturer’s needs. Freight rail moves nearly 75% of the new cars and light trucks purchased in the U.S.

**Energy:** From ethanol to crude oil, railroads move nearly every U.S. energy product and many of the raw materials needed to produce them. As energy sources and consumption patterns have changed, the freight rail industry has adjusted to customer needs to continue safely and efficiently moving energy products.

**Chemicals:** Thanks to the chemicals railroads ship each year, Americans get their bottled water, thriving garden, hand sanitizer and toilet bowl cleaner safely and efficiently. Some chemicals are hazardous, and freight railroads are committed to safely transporting them. More than 99.9% of hazmat shipments reach their destination without incident.

**Construction:** Freight rail is the foundation for the nation’s construction industry, moving steel, cement, lumber and much more. Railroads’ lumber transport has become a bellwether for the American dream as rail carloads strongly correlate to housing starts.

**Food:** Railroad shipments of farm and food products fill grocery store shelves every day. To preserve the nation’s role as the world’s top grain exporter, railroads have invested in high-capacity covered hoppers and “shuttle trains” so U.S. corn, soybeans and wheat can efficiently reach a hungry world. Railroads typically carry more than 60,000 carloads of food and agriculture products per week.

**Intermodal:** Intermodal combines the best attributes of different transportation modes to yield an efficient, cost-effective total movement. Intermodal transports various goods Americans use daily — from many products on a retailer’s shelves to industrial and agricultural goods like auto parts and grain. Together with other transportation providers, railroads carry nearly 61 tons of freight per American each year.