

Freight Railroads: Reducing Highway Gridlock

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

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Summary

More freight moving by rail would mean **less highway gridlock** and **easier travel** for motorists. Railroads are the environmentally responsible way to meet America's freight transportation challenges, fight highway overcrowding, and help reduce the need to build costly new highways.

- Because a freight train can carry the freight of **280 or more trucks** — creating space on the highways for **1,100 or more cars** — railroads help fight highway gridlock.
- Railroads also **reduce the huge economic costs** of highway gridlock. According to the [2009 Urban Mobility Report](#) published by the Texas Transportation Institute, highway congestion in the United States costs us \$87 billion just in wasted travel time (4.2 billion hours, or nearly a full week for every traveler) and wasted fuel (2.8 billion gallons, or three weeks' worth of gas for every traveler) per year. Lost productivity, cargo delays, and other costs add tens of billions of dollars to this tab.
- **Relief for highway gridlock is on the rails.** Building and maintaining highways has always been extremely expensive, and highway construction and maintenance costs have soared even higher in recent years. Today, in fact, it can easily cost **\$15 million** (and often much more) and well over a decade just to add a lane to a **mile of highway** — compared to \$2 million to \$4 million and relatively little time for a typical mile of rail line.
- Shifting freight from trucks to rail **reduces** the pressure to build costly new roads and helps **cut the costs** of maintaining the roads we already have.

