

Green Freight and Port

Green freight and port policies dedicate funding toward improving the efficiency and environmental impact of the nation's multimodal goods movement infrastructure.

Green freight and port policies would simultaneously increase the efficiency and reliability of the system, while decreasing environmental impacts. As the population has increased and our businesses have become more dynamic, the amount of freight that flows in, out, and around the country has quickly expanded and these trends are likely to continue. The high demand requires an efficient, clean, and multi-modal system of goods movement.

Transportation Authorization Bill

The next transportation authorization should establish a Green Freight and Ports Program to provide funding for railroad, highway, port, and intermodal transfer projects. It should create a competitive grant program administered by US DOT to fund investments that expand and "green" our freight system and nation's ports, with a focus on improving first/last mile intermodal connections. The program should support a transition from diesel-based trucking to rail-based goods movement, coordinated with increased use of hybrid and non-carbon-based truck and train systems.

The Facts

- » **On a typical day**, about 43 million tons of goods, valued at about \$29 billion, moved nearly 12 billion ton-miles on the nation's transportation network.¹
- » **Good movements via truck** is the dominant mode of transportation, moving 60 percent of the amount.¹
- » **Every ton-mile of freight** moved by rail instead of truck reduced GHG emissions by two-thirds or more.²
- » **Pollution from the freight** transportation sector is concentrated around ports, highways, rail yards, railroad tracks, warehouses, and distribution centers.
- » **By 2035, thirty percent of the rail network**, or 16,000 miles, will experience unstable flows and service break-down conditions.³
- » **Recurring peak-period congestion** is forecast to slow traffic on 20,000 miles of the highway system and create stop-and-go conditions on an additional 45,000 miles by 2035.³



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Want to find out more about Green Freight and Port?

Here are some great resources on how your community can get started:

t4america.org

See our resources section for informational toolkits

EPA

SmartWay Transport basic information

FHWA

Report "The Effects of Freight Movement on Air Quality" and overview on intermodal freight transportation



Solutions

1. Establish a National Infrastructure Commission tasked with identifying transportation investments of national priority.
2. Freight planning should be incorporated into regional transportation plans that are then evaluated against a set of national transportation objectives such as reduced energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, improved access, mobility and safety.
3. Include public health assessments as part of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) review of all major proposed transportation investments.
4. National incentives to create efficient connections from ports and distribution centers to national freight corridors, including state-of-the-art intermodal facilities to transfer freight between rail and truck, expanded cross-country rail freight mainlines, and improvements in the condition of short line railroad track.

Case Study: The Southern Tier Extension Railroad



Southern Tier Extension Railroad before and after revitalization.

The Southern Tier Extension is a 145-mile long rail line through western New York and Pennsylvania, was rehabilitated by the Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board. This project was a collaborative effort among multiple stakeholders, including private entities, school districts, local, county, state, and federal governments, to rehabilitate a dormant mainline railroad extension. The project addressed deferred maintenance issues through a capital rehabilitation of the line. The results were positive; since 2001, the number of shippers using the line has increased from one to 20 and traffic increased from 75 to 54,000 annual carloads.

1. Freight in America, Bureau of Transportation Statistics

2. U.S. EPA. Inventory of US Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990- 2006.

3. Association of American Railroads, National Rail Infrastructure Capacity and Investment Study prepared by Cambridge Systematics, Inc. (Washington, DC: September 2007), figure 4.4, page 4-10.

4. NADO 2008 Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards <http://66.132.139.69/uploads/excbook08.pdf>