

STAYING ON TRACK TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE



Railway Association
of Canada



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Canada's railways are key to addressing climate change—they are the most environmentally sound way to move freight and people over land. Transportation is Canada's second-largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, accounting for 30% of total emissions. For Canada to achieve the Paris Agreement goal of limiting the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C, the transport sector must make a major contribution. But transportation is one of the few sectors where GHGs are still rising.



1.1%

Railroads are responsible for only 1.1% of Canada's total GHG emissions, and 3.5% of Canada's transportation sector GHG emissions.



44% ↓

Canada's freight railways have reduced their GHG emissions intensity (kg CO₂e per 1,000 revenue tonne-kilometres) by 44.4% since 1990.



42% ↓

Canada's inter-city passenger railways have reduced their GHG emissions intensity (kg CO₂e per passenger-km) by 41.9% since 1991.

THE RAIL ADVANTAGE



289,177

tonnes of GHG emissions avoided by VIA Rail trains in 2019 when compared with car travel

A SUCCESSFUL TRACK RECORD



20-25%

Railways invest between 20 and 25% of their revenues into their infrastructure every year to increase efficiency and sustainability

GROWING EMISSIONS FROM COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC POSE A SERIOUS CHALLENGE

The Government of Canada's Second Biennial Report on Climate Change projects that emissions from moving freight across Canada will eclipse passenger emissions around 2030. If Canada is to live up to its Paris commitments, the freight industry will have to do more to reduce emissions.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OF RAIL IS UNMATCHED

Despite only accounting for 3.8% of Canada's transportation sector emissions, railways move tens of millions of passengers each year, as well as approximately \$320B worth of goods, 70% of inter-city freight, and 50% of Canadian exports (by volume).



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



4.1 MEGATONNES OF CO₂

Shifting just 10 percent of freight from trucks to rail would reduce GHG emissions by 4.1 megatonnes of CO₂e



1 TRAIN = 300 TRUCKS

One unit-train can remove upwards of 300 trucks from our congested roads.

1 TONNE OF FREIGHT, 1 LITRE OF FUEL.

Locomotives can move 1 tonne of freight more than 200 kilometers with just a single litre of fuel.

The transport sector can play a vital role in achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. I count on the commitment of the global railway community to make transport more sustainable—and your gathering is especially timely coming within weeks of the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

— Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations 2007–2016, statement to the 2016 International Union of Railways 2016 Sustainability Conference

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR RAILWAYS CAN HELP CANADIANS FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

Governments should recognize the important role that railways can play in reducing Canada's GHG emissions. When governments support railways, they are taking concrete action in the fight against climate change for the benefit of all Canadians.

By incentivizing a shift from other transportation modes to rail, Canadians will enjoy improved access to a greener inter-city shipping and transit options. Through strategic investments in railway infrastructure, Canadians will benefit from the lower emissions produced by moving freight by rail.

In 2016, the Pan Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change, from the Government of Canada, eight provinces and three territories, stated that shifting from higher- to lower-emitting modes of transportation includes things like riding public transit or cycling instead of driving a car, and transporting goods by rail instead of trucks.

FREIGHT RAILWAYS ARE FUEL EFFICIENT

Rail can move one tonne of freight more than 200 kilometers on a single litre of fuel. Not only are trains almost four times more fuel efficient than trucks, they produce 75 percent fewer GHGs. Shifting just 10 percent of freight from trucks to rail would reduce GHG emissions by 4.1 megatonnes of CO₂e.

VIA RAIL MOVES MILLIONS OF PASSENGERS WHILE REDUCING EMISSIONS

VIA Rail moves millions of passengers every year across Canada, helping to alleviate congestion in and out of cities and reducing transport emissions—passenger trains are three times more fuel-efficient than the average car. Since 2005, VIA Rail has reduced GHG emissions per passenger-kilometre by 37 percent. Today, travelling by rail from Toronto-Montreal emits roughly 5.5 times less GHG emissions than flying.

VIA Rail recently awarded a contract to Siemens Canada to build train sets for VIA Rail's new fleet that will be among the most fuel-efficient diesel-electric locomotives in the world today.

