



RAIL PASSENGERS
ASSOCIATION

Passenger Trains: An Energy & Climate Solution

Modern passenger rail can carry large numbers of people further, faster, and more efficiently than ever before.

2026 has seen a surge in gas prices due to instability in the global market, and American families are feeling the pain at the pump. This is a problem that has been long in the making—in 2023, the Energy Information Administration reported that **petroleum products accounted for about 89% of the total U.S. transportation sector energy use.**

Any effective national policy for energy independence will **require** diversifying our transportation network and investing in energy-efficient, electrified passenger rail.

Transit Rail Is:

70% more energy efficient per passenger-mile than cars

74% more energy efficient than light trucks

- Mass transit saves the U.S. six billion gallons of gasoline annually (APTA)
- Mass transit reduces carbon emissions in the U.S. by 63 million metric tons annually (APTA)
- 2.8 billion gallons of fuel were wasted in traffic congestion in 2024 (TTI)
- Transportation accounts for about 29% of US greenhouse gas emissions (EPA)
- Individuals can avoid driving 4,400 miles each year by taking public transportation

Passenger Trains are the Green Travel Option

Amtrak travel produces up to 83% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than driving and up to 73% fewer emissions than flying.

The most effective national policy for reducing harmful pollution is to allow consumers to choose to travel by train instead of on crowded highways and airports.

Innovative equipment helps Amtrak find energy efficiency solutions:

Amtrak trains are:

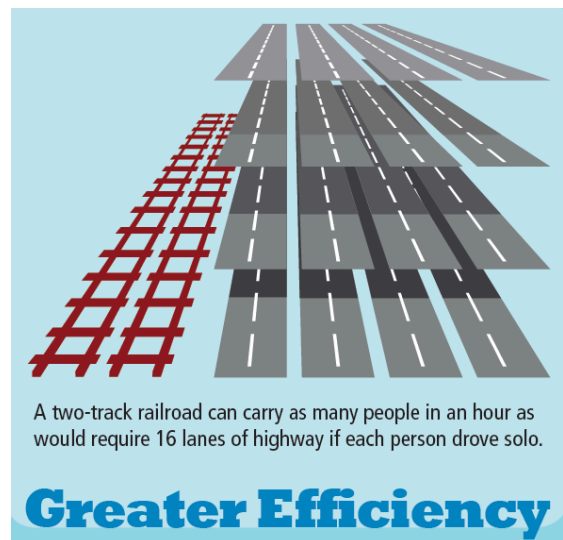
- **53% more energy efficient** per passenger-mile than light trucks
 - **45% more energy efficient** than automobiles
 - **34% more energy efficient** than domestic airline travel
- Amtrak has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% over the past decade—the equivalent of removing 51,251 passenger vehicles from the road.
- By investing in modern equipment and facilities, Amtrak will be able to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% over the next decade.

Amtrak Helps Mitigate Direct and Indirect Air Pollution:

- Running electric locomotives on the Northeast Corridor and fuel-efficient diesels elsewhere.
- Removing tens of millions of passengers a year from highways and airports
- Encouraging denser development around many of its stations.
- Adding to the appeal and cost-effectiveness of local and regional transit by serving passengers, making connections and sharing facilities.

Technology Can't Change Geometry

- It takes 16 lanes of highway to carry as many people per hour as just a single two-track railroad.
- Railroads reduce the amount of paved surface required for transportation. Serious degradation of aquatic ecosystems occurs when more than 10% of a watershed is paved.
- 300 miles of railroad uses less land than a single commercial airport.



For more information, please visit RailPassengers.org/Leg.Resources