

PASSENGER RAIL POLICIES

Key Facts

- Most passenger rail runs on freight-owned tracks, including 70% of Amtrak miles.
- Freight service and safety must come first; passenger use must not disrupt operations.
- Freight railroads must be fairly compensated; each project requires case-by-case review.

Other than the Northeast Corridor, [Amtrak](#) and state-supported route trains, as well as most commuter railroads, primarily operate on tracks owned by freight railroads. In fact, 70% of the train miles operated by Amtrak on tracks owned by freight railroads. In addition, most of the higher-speed and intercity passenger rail projects under development nationwide plan to use freight-owned facilities. Most freight railroads follow these principles when considering proposals for new or additional commuter or passenger rail service:

- **Safety First:** [Railroads are a safe way](#) to move people and freight, and everyone involved in railroading wants to keep it that way. That is why safety has to come first when it comes to passenger or commuter trains sharing track or rights-of-way with freight trains.
- **Access & Capacity:** Passenger rail use of freight rail corridors should not compromise freight railroads' ability to serve present or future customers.
- **Full Compensation:** Freight railroads should be compensated for the use of their tracks and not be expected to subsidize commuter or passenger railroads.
- **No One-size Approach Fits All:** Each project involving passenger rail on freight-owned corridors has unique challenges and circumstances that should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

THE DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN AMTRAK AND FREIGHT RAILROADS.

Amtrak and freight railroads move the people and goods our nation depends on. Together, these railroads reduce pollution, provide American jobs and promote local and regional economic development.

AMTRAK	FREIGHT RAILROADS
Primarily federally owned; connects large and small communities throughout the nation.	Privately owned; accounts for 40% of freight on a ton-mile basis.
More than 170,000 employees help move tens of millions of people annually.	The total Class I rail employment in September 2024 was 120,399.
Over 21,000 miles of track, mostly owned by freight railroads.	Nearly 140,000 mile private network.
Tickets and state support covers most but not all operating costs.	Average of \$23 billion privately invested back into the network.
Will help meet expected 24% national population growth over next 40 years	Will help meet expected 30% increase in freight demand over next 20 years.
A safe way to move passengers.	The safest way to move freight over land.
47% more energy efficient than traveling by car	3-4 times more fuel efficient than trucks, on average.
Needs adequate funding for growth and maintenance.	Needs ability to continue privately investing