

international trade



The Chicago rail network plays a major role in international trade, transporting materials to manufacturers and delivering products to consumers all over the world. Chicago is the primary U.S. rail hub where the six largest Class I railroads connect and where rail freight is transferred between Eastern and Western railroads. Freight trains carry billions of tons of goods annually to and from U.S. ports, connecting American businesses to the global marketplace.

A project of national and regional significance, the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) includes 70 critically needed rail and highway infrastructure improvements in Northeastern Illinois. With 25 percent of all U.S. rail freight going to, from, or through the Chicago region, CREATE will have a major impact on the entire U.S. rail network. CREATE improvements also support the National Export Initiative, which seeks to double exports from 2010 to 2015.

The DeLong Company, a major supplier of food grains based in Wisconsin, exported 130,000 intermodal containers of agricultural products out of the Chicago area in FY 2011.

According to U.S. DOT, the volume of imported and exported goods transported via rail to, from, or through Chicago is forecast to increase nearly 150 percent between 2010 and 2040. More high value products will be shipped via rail in the coming years, so efficient and reliable service will be increasingly important. Infrastructure improvements planned through the CREATE Program are critical to fully unlocking the potential of the national freight rail system to serve significant future demand.

International Trade with the Chicago Region (Imports & Exports) by Destination, Weight and Value – 2010 and 2040

Destination	Quantity Imported & Exported (thousand tons)			Value Imported & Exported (\$ millions)		
	2010 (actual)	2040 (forecast)	2010-2040 (forecast growth)	2010 (actual)	2040 (forecast)	2010-2040 (forecast growth)
Eastern Asia	9,639	22,635	135%	\$18,580	\$58,800	216%
Canada	6,854	12,446	82%	\$3,098	\$6,963	125%
Mexico	2,219	10,580	377%	\$1,789	\$6,540	266%
Europe	2,275	5,997	164%	\$6,308	\$21,704	244%
Southeast Asia & Oceania	1,256	2,864	128%	\$3,454	\$10,802	213%
Rest of Americas	1,464	3,792	159%	\$4,501	\$14,746	228%
Southwest & Central Asia	893	2,567	187%	\$3,073	\$10,502	242%
Africa	199	740	272%	\$748	\$3,011	303%
Total	24,798	61,620	148%	\$41,551	\$133,067	220%

Source: U.S. DOT, Freight Analysis Framework 3

Our nation's freight rail system is critical to getting virtually every kind of consumer product on store shelves, ensuring new automobiles reach their showrooms, and allowing the latest fashions to be available at the right times.

Key Products Imported via Chicago Using Rail

- **Electronics** are the top import by value overall (\$3.7 billion in 2010) and the number one product category for imports from Eastern, Southwest, and Central Asia as well as from Southeast Asia and Oceania.
- **Machinery** is the top import from Europe and the rest of the Americas, and the second largest import overall (more than \$3.5 billion).
- At \$3.5 billion, **motorized vehicles** are the third largest import.
- **Textiles/leather** is the top commodity from Africa and the fourth largest import category overall (\$2.4 billion).
- **Miscellaneous manufactured products**, including toys, games, sporting goods, and watches, comprise the fifth largest category of imports at \$2.3 billion.

Freight rail is the safest, most efficient, affordable, and environmentally sound way to move goods bound for the global marketplace. The better the efficiency and of the national rail network becomes, the more U.S. industries can compete in global markets.

Corn Products International, a leading global ingredient provider in the Chicago metropolitan area, exports products to over 20 countries world-wide, most leaving the region by rail.

Key Products Exported via Chicago Using Rail

- **Miscellaneous manufactured products** is the top export category overall by value (\$2.7 billion in 2010) and the number one export to Europe, Mexico and the rest of the Americas.
- **Base metal articles** comprise the second largest export category (\$856 million), and the top export to Southeast Asia and Oceania.
- At \$758 million, **textiles/leather** represents the third largest category of exports overall.
- The top export to Eastern Asia and the fourth largest export category overall is **fertilizers** (\$676 million).
- **Other agricultural products** is the fifth largest category of exports (\$582 million).

According to the **Illinois Manufacturing Association**, exports from Illinois have more than doubled in the past decade, and the manufacturing sector needs a safe, reliable and efficient transportation system to continue growing exports.

Well-developed transportation infrastructure is critical for effective functioning of the economy. Efficient transportation mitigates the effect of distance between markets, reducing transport times and costs. While just over a decade ago, the World Economic Forum ranked the U.S. seventh in the world for overall infrastructure quality, today we are ranked 24th among 139 countries. Investment in projects such as the CREATE Program is needed to help U.S. producers efficiently move goods to

market and cost effectively receive inputs to production.