

Freight transport being transformed: TRIP report

by Canadian Shipper

Washington, DC — The ability of the nation's freight transportation system to efficiently and safely accommodate the growing demand for freight movement could be hampered by inadequate transportation capacity, institutional barriers to enhancing the nation's freight facilities, a lack of adequate funding for needed improvements to the freight network, and a shortage of drivers, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit. At the same time, freight movement is being transformed by advances in vehicle autonomy, manufacturing, warehousing and supply chain automation, increases in e-commerce, and growing logistic networks being developed to accommodate consumer demand for faster delivery.

TRIP's report, [America's Rolling Warehouses: Opportunities and Challenges with the Nation's Freight Delivery System](#), examines current and projected levels of freight movement in the U.S., large truck safety, and trends impacting freight movement. It concludes with a series of recommendations to improve the nation's freight transportation system. The chart below shows the top 20 states with the highest value of freight by all modes of transportation in 2016, the highest share of rural interstate vehicle miles of travel (VMT) by combination trucks, the largest average annual number of large truck fatalities per one million population from 2013-2017, and the largest projected increase in freight by value between 2016 and 2045.

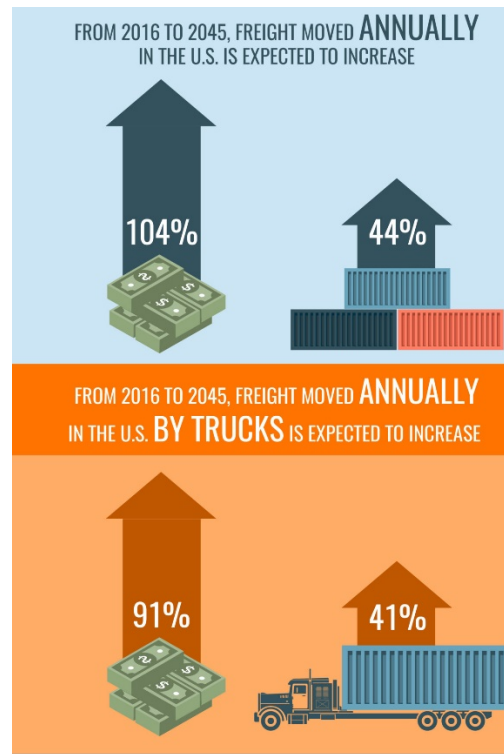
"The new TRIP report again highlights the urgent need for federal action to modernize America's infrastructure," said U.S. Chamber of Commerce Vice President for Transportation Infrastructure Ed Mortimer. "The future of our country's ability to compete in a 21st century economy by providing the safe movement of commerce is at stake, and this report helps bring a spotlight to the issue."

The TRIP report also found that 12 percent of travel on Interstate highways and 21 percent of travel on rural Interstate highways is by combination trucks.

"TRIP's report makes an important contribution to a growing body of evidence

that our deteriorating infrastructure is putting the brakes on our economy," said Chris Spear, president and CEO of the American Trucking Association. "The cost of doing nothing is too high and will only get higher if our leaders do not step up and put forward a comprehensive investment package backed by real funding."

While the amount and value of goods being shipped has risen to unprecedented levels, mounting traffic congestion is increasing the cost of moving freight and reducing the economic competitiveness and efficiency of businesses that require reliable, affordable freight transportation. Traffic congestion resulted in \$74.5 billion in additional operational costs to the trucking industry in 2016 as a result of commercial trucks being stuck in traffic for 1.2 billion hours.



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"Infrastructure issues lead to increased shipping costs, delayed delivery times, and decreased productivity for U.S. manufacturers," said Doosan Bobcat North America President Mike Ballweber. "Whether it's a hauling 7,500-pound skid-steer loader to a customer in Georgia or a shipment of attachments to a dealership in

Arizona, we depend on the U.S. freight transportation system to deliver our products efficiently and safely. I encourage our lawmakers in Washington, D.C. to make transportation infrastructure a priority and fund needed repairs and upgrades to our roads, highways and bridges."

Advances in vehicle autonomy, manufacturing, warehousing and supply chain automation have transformed freight delivery, along with increases in e-commerce and the growing logistic networks being developed by Amazon and other large retailers. A lack of adequate parking for large trucks and a shortage of available truck drivers, particularly for long-haul trips, challenge the safety and efficiency of the nation's freight system.

TRIP's report concludes with a series of recommendations to improve freight transportation by increasing capacity on the nation's freight transportation system, particularly at major bottlenecks; improving the reliability and condition of intermodal connectors between major highways and rail, ports and waterways; continued development of vehicle autonomy and the further automation of warehousing; improving roadway safety and providing additional truck parking spaces to ensure adequate and timely rest for drivers; providing funding for freight transportation improvements that is substantial, continuing, multimodal, reliable, and, in most cases, specifically dedicated to freight transportation projects; and, providing a permanent, adequate and reliable funding fix to the federal Highway Trust Fund as a critical step towards funding a 21st Century freight transportation system.

"As consumers demand faster deliveries and a more responsive supply chain, the nation's freight transportation network is facing unprecedented roadblocks in the form of increasing congestion and a lack of transportation funding to improve the nation's transportation system," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP. "Fixing the federal Highway Trust Fund with a long-term, sustainable source of revenue that supports needed transportation investment will be crucial to improving the efficiency and safety of our freight transportation system."