



State's freight shipments among highest in U.S.

[David Sullens](#) | October 3, 2019

WASHINGTON, D.C. — 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, the report said.

TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors, and suppliers, businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction, labor unions, and organizations concerned with surface transportation.

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 it says would improve the nation's freight transportation system.

TRIP's report found that freight delivery is expected to increase rapidly as a result of economic growth, increasing demand, growing international trade, changing business and retail models, and a significantly increased reliance on e-commerce by businesses and households.

Each year, Pennsylvania's freight system moves approximately \$1.1 trillion worth of freight, the fifth highest amount in the nation. From 2016 to 2045, freight moved annually by trucks in Pennsylvania is expected to increase 80 percent by value (inflation-adjusted dollars).

"The vast majority of goods that are transported through the Mid-Atlantic region will pass through the Keystone State to reach their destination. Travel on Pennsylvania's

rural roads, interstates and infrastructure will only continue to grow as freight transportation increases," said Jason Wagner, managing director of Pennsylvania Highway Information Association. "This only further supports how critical it is that we stop diverting money from the Motor License Fund and return it to improving mobility on our roadways."

The TRIP report also found that 25 percent of travel on Pennsylvania's rural Interstate highways is by combination trucks, the ninth highest share in the nation. "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."

In Pennsylvania, from 2013-2017, an average of 13 people per one million population were killed annually in crashes involving a large truck.

Nationwide, traffic fatalities as a result of crashes involving large trucks (10,000 lbs. or greater) increased 20 percent from 2013 (3,981) to 2017 (4,761). Approximately five-out-of-six people killed in crashes involving a large truck were occupants of the other vehicle involved in the crash or pedestrians or bicyclists. The most frequent event prior to fatal crashes between large trucks and another vehicle is the entering or encroaching into a large truck's lane by the other vehicle, TRIP said.

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 including commercial trucks being stuck in traffic for 1.2 billion hours, according to the TRIP report.