

Rail freight delivering for Britain

British businesses are saving £1 billion a year – or £2.7 million a day – by using rail to transport goods, according to a new report published by the Rail Delivery Group, which represents the freight operating companies along with the passenger train owning groups and infrastructure provider Network Rail.

A further £500 million a year of economic, environmental and social benefits come from rail freight reducing the number of lorries on our roads.

Last year, more than 7.6 million road journeys were saved by transporting goods by rail, the equivalent of around 7,000 heavy goods vehicles driving from London to Edinburgh every day.

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Since freight was opened up to private competition and investment in the mid-nineties, billions of pounds have been invested in the sector. That has helped pay for more efficient, longer trains which each carry an average of 50% more cargo than they did a decade ago.

Investment has helped rail freight in Britain grow by 70% in the past 20 years and increase its share of the market for transporting goods, in contrast to some still largely European state-run railways.

The rail freight operators have invested over £2 billion in new locomotives, wagons and other capital equipment since privatisation. And successive governments have recognised the benefits of rail freight and supported its growth. As part of wider railway funding, government has invested more than £500 million over the last five years, and is committed to more than £200 million over the next five years for specific schemes to enhance freight infrastructure.

The sector is now vital to Britain's economic competitiveness, transporting over £30 billion worth of goods a year. That includes everything from groceries destined for supermarket shelves, premium whiskies to over half the fuel delivered to power stations that is used to generate electricity.

Rail freight also helps ensure British manufacturing can compete globally by sending products on the first leg of their

global journey by connecting factories with container ports.

Alongside the general growth in passenger rail operations that have seen us become the fastest growing major railway in Europe, freight is also planning to grow. Over the next five years, rail freight operators plan to invest hundreds of millions of pounds to carry more goods, faster, more efficiently and with even greater reliability.

Peter Maybury, chairman of Freightliner and the RDG freight group, said: "High levels of private sector investment and innovation matched by significant infrastructure improvement are now helping rail freight to bring £1.5 billion a year of benefits to Britain's businesses and the wider economy.

"Rail freight helps keep shop shelves stocked and the power on while taking thousands of lorries off the roads, reducing harmful emissions and keeping Britain competitive in the global economy.

"Rail freight has been transformed over the past two decades and is set to keep growing. By continuing to drive efficiency and improve performance, operators could help more than double the size of the sector over the next three decades and increase the economic benefits of rail freight to over £4 billion a year."

For more information on the report and the work of the RDG visit

www.raildeliverygroup.com

or email freight@raildeliverygroup.com

