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## 10 National Benefits of the U.S. Inland Waterways

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The inland waterways segment of the transportation network is often out of sight, out of mind, as it quietly moves more than 624 million tons of “building block” commodity freight annually for use in this country and for export. Without this critically important mode, our nation’s roadways would clog and crumble, our air quality would be reduced, our consumption of and cost for energy would increase, our global economic competitiveness would erode and our quality of life would be diminished. Here are 10 ways in which the inland waterways benefit the nation:

1. Barge transportation keeps America moving: More than 60 percent of the nation’s grain exports, 22 percent of our domestic petroleum and petroleum products, and 20 percent of the coal used in electricity generation is moved on our nation’s waterways.
2. Congestion relief: Just one 15-barge tow of dry bulk cargo keeps 1,050 trucks off our nation’s already over-crowded highways, or 216 railcars from blocking railroad crossings in our communities.
3. Economic prosperity: That 624 million tons of cargo moved annually equals around \$70 billion back into the U.S. economy and is a volume equal to around 14 percent of all intercity freight. Providing lower shipping costs, barge transportation helps our farmers to be more competitive in world markets, allows our building materials to move cheaper, and keeps our electricity rates lower helping many Americans in these difficult economic times.
4. Jobs, jobs, jobs: Farmers, utility workers, steel workers, builders, shippers, tugboat crews, port workers, laborers, terminal operators, and many others rely on the waterways transportation to sustain good American jobs.
5. Cleaner air, fewer emissions: Inland waterways transportation has a lower carbon footprint and generates fewer carbon dioxide emissions than rail or truck for each ton of cargo compared to transporting that same cargo by these other modes.

6. Energy efficiency: Barges can move one ton of cargo 576 miles on one gallon of fuel -- more the 100 miles more than rail transport and 400 miles more than truck transport.

7. Multi-beneficiaries: The inland waterways system benefits many, including those who use it for recreation, municipal and industrial water supply, hydropower and flood control. Many communities along our inland waterways benefit from economic development opportunities, and private property owners enjoy higher property values because of the steady pools of water created by locks and dams on our inland waterways.

8. Community connections: The inland waterways system includes 12,000 miles of commercially navigable channels and around 240 lock sites. America's inland marine highways move commerce to and from 38 states throughout the nation's heartland and Pacific Northwest, serve industrial and agricultural centers and facilitate imports and exports at gateway ports on the Gulf Coast.

9. Safety in numbers: Inland waterways transport has a low injury and fatality record compared to rail or truck. Safety-related statistics for all modes of freight transportation show one injury in the inland marine sector for every 125.2 in the rail sector and 2,171.5 in the highway sector, and one fatality in the inland marine sector for every 22.7 in rail and 155 in highway.

10. Excess capacity: Our nation's navigable waterways system has an abundance of unused capacity, unlike the truck or rail industries. With statistics calling for a doubling of exports over the next decade, how can we move the products to feed the world's inhabitants most efficiently and with fewer societal impacts? Via the waterways!

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