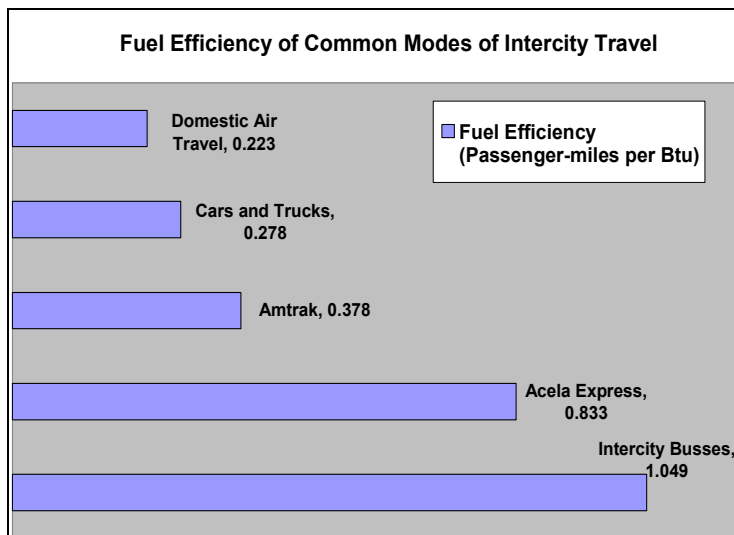


➤ **Contact: Colin Peppard, Transportation Policy Coordinator • 202-222-0747 • cpeppard@foe.org**

Cities, towns, and states need a variety of transportation options to help move people, goods, and services where they need to go. We can meet this need without polluting our environment if we make sure our transportation choices are smart and balanced. One option that has yet to achieve its full potential is passenger railroads like Amtrak. Unfortunately, some in Congress wants to get rid of Amtrak, leaving Americans without a transportation option that is often cleaner and more fuel-efficient than highway or air travel.

Problem: Our transportation system relies too heavily on cars, trucks, and the airlines

- **Pollution from gridlocked autos¹**
 - Responsible for about half of smog and other hazardous air pollutants in the United States, and 90 percent of the carbon monoxide found in urban air.
- **Pollution from crowded airports²**
 - Airports in Los Angeles, Chicago, and the District of Columbia as well as many other cities rank among the top 10 industrial air pollution sources
- **Increasingly fractured communities**
 - The number of hours that Americans spend in traffic is on the rise. Nearly 25 percent of Americans get stuck in traffic jams at least once a week³.



- Along with long-distance busses, Amtrak is one of the most energy-efficient modes of intercity travel.
Source: CRS 96-22
- High-speed trains like the Acela Express between Washington D.C. and Boston have even greater efficiencies and emit less air pollution.
Source: Environmental Impacts of Intercity Travel - Zhong, (2004)
- The average Amtrak train puts out two-thirds less global warming pollution per passenger-mile than cars and trucks, and half the global warming pollution of airplanes.
Source: *Over Our Heads* - Ryan (1997)

Solution: Amtrak – A Vision for the Future!

- Right now, the automobile remains the predominant mode of intercity transportation, followed by air travel. In recent years the trend in intercity transportation has been toward more frequent, shorter trips⁴. This means that we are using more energy on fewer trip-miles. Fortunately, Amtrak is well positioned to serve many of these frequent intercity travelers.
- The good news about the environmental benefits of Amtrak is that the surface is just barley being scratched. We can already see an environmental benefit despite centuries-old tracks and decades-old trains. With reform efforts steadily succeeding, Amtrak is ready and willing to begin achieving its full potential. The technology behind trains just keeps getting better, and we can see energy-efficient high-speed trains moving passengers swiftly and safely between cities around the world.

The Bottom Line: If America put the effort into upgrading our third-world railroads to a world-class system of energy-efficient high-speed trains, we could relieve congestion, cut pollution, and lower our demand for oil while creating jobs and increasing security.

¹ USEPA Plain English Guide to the Clean Air Act

² *Flying Off Course* – Stenzel et. al. (1996)

³ ABC News - 2005

⁴ The Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Council on Environmental Quality