

Physical Infrastructure



On the Rails to Resilience: The Role of Short Lines in Rural Prosperity



Short-line railways play a quiet but powerful role in connecting Saskatchewan's communities. These rail lines support the movement of farm products, supplies and goods that help rural economies thrive. Through the Short Line Railway Improvement Program, the province is reinforcing this essential network by helping short-line companies upgrade tracks, improve crossing surfaces and sightlines, maintain bridges and rehabilitate older sections of rail.

Across Saskatchewan, 14 provincially regulated short lines operate on more than 2,100 kilometres of track forming a vital link between rural regions and global markets. Their role is especially important for agricultural shippers, who rely on dependable transportation to move crops safely and efficiently. Since 2008, the provincial government has provided \$9.6 million in grants to support this work, with program funding of \$1 million in 2025-26.

Saskatchewan's short line railways operate on over 2,100 km of track.

Rail transport also supports practical emissions stewardship. Because trains are generally three to four times more fuel efficient than trucks, shifting even a portion of shipments from truck to rail helps lower overall emissions intensity in the transportation sector. The Railway Association of Canada estimates that moving just 10 per cent of truck traffic to rail could reduce emissions from the transportation sector by more than four million tonnes each year. Shipping goods by short line also helps reduce wear and tear on roads and highways.

Why It Matters

Investing in short-line rail strengthens more than transportation. Reliable rail service supports steady agricultural markets, keeps rural communities connected and provides safer, more efficient options for moving goods. These upgrades help protect economic stability while advancing emissions stewardship, contributing to a resilient, well-functioning transportation system for Saskatchewan's future.

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