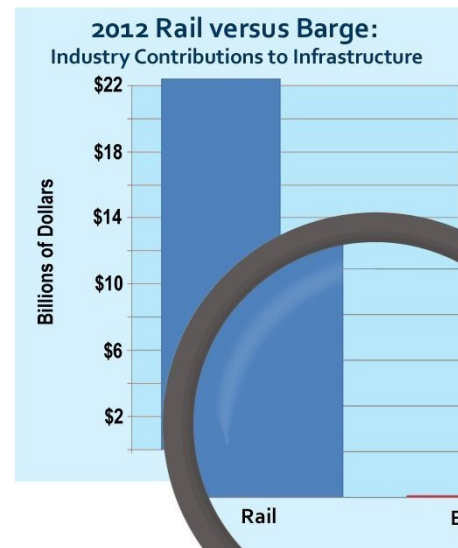


BUSTED: Heavily Subsidized River Navigation Is Not As Efficient As Claimed

Barges move less than 5% of the freight in the United States, but they are the most heavily subsidized mode of transportation by percentage. Taxpayers pay for 90% of the infrastructure costs annually — and pay **all** of the costs to operate and maintain the river navigation system and to restore the damage that navigation causes to the nation's rivers. The industry pays just 10% of the system costs to cover a portion of some major construction.

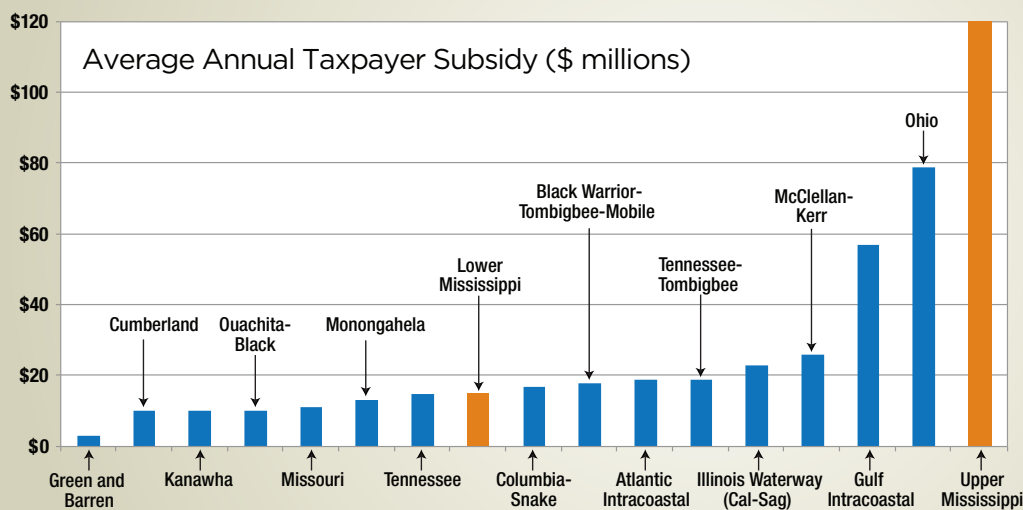
Despite this hefty subsidy, the navigation industry wants taxpayers to pay even more of the costs of transporting goods by barge, including billions of dollars for new locks to increase the industry's profits. The industry argues that more subsidies are worth it because barges are more efficient than trains. **On the Upper Mississippi River System, however, barges don't save fuel or time.**

Why barges aren't as cheap as you think — because taxpayers are footing the bill.



Rail industry contribution includes new rail equipment valued at about \$4 billion.

Where The Subsidies Go



The Upper Mississippi River only moves 29 billion ton miles annually, a tenth of the traffic of America's busiest river — the Lower Mississippi — yet it receives more river navigation subsidies than any other waterway in the nation.



American Rivers
Rivers Connect Us®

The **Nicollet Island Coalition** is a group of environmental, conservation, and taxpayer organizations who are working to protect and restore the Upper Mississippi River by reforming the navigation sector and is facilitated by **American Rivers**.

Why does it matter?

Taxpayers already pay far too much to prop up the navigation industry. To make matters even worse, these subsidies are damaging the nation's rivers through the construction of locks and dams, and repeated river dredging and water level manipulation. Railroads don't receive any direct taxpayer subsidies, and 80% of highway costs are paid for by people who drive. Barges are not more efficient than other modes of transportation, and do not deserve disproportionate taxpayer support.

Why don't I know about this by now?

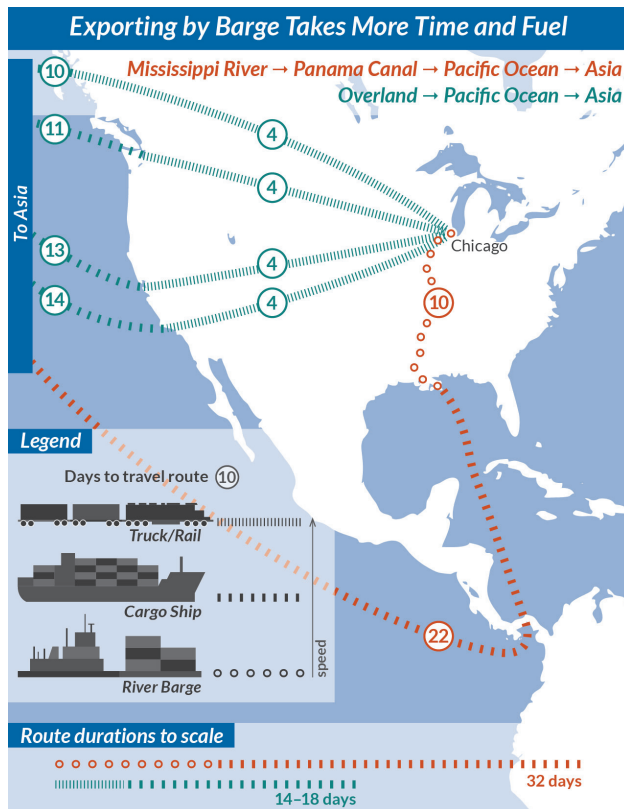
Most information about barge efficiency is paid for by the industry. That information ignores unit trains, excludes information about the total distance traveled per trip, which is almost always much farther for a barge than for a train or truck; and inflates the fuel efficiency statistics for barges on the Upper Mississippi.

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

Barges must travel significantly further than rail and trucks because rivers have natural twists and turns and goods rarely reach the final destination by barge alone. Roads and railroads typically take more direct routes. These extra river miles and additional transportation needs reduce overall fuel efficiency and increase transit time. The barge industry conveniently ignores this adjustment that can have huge impacts on delivery time, trip fuel consumption, and other factors.

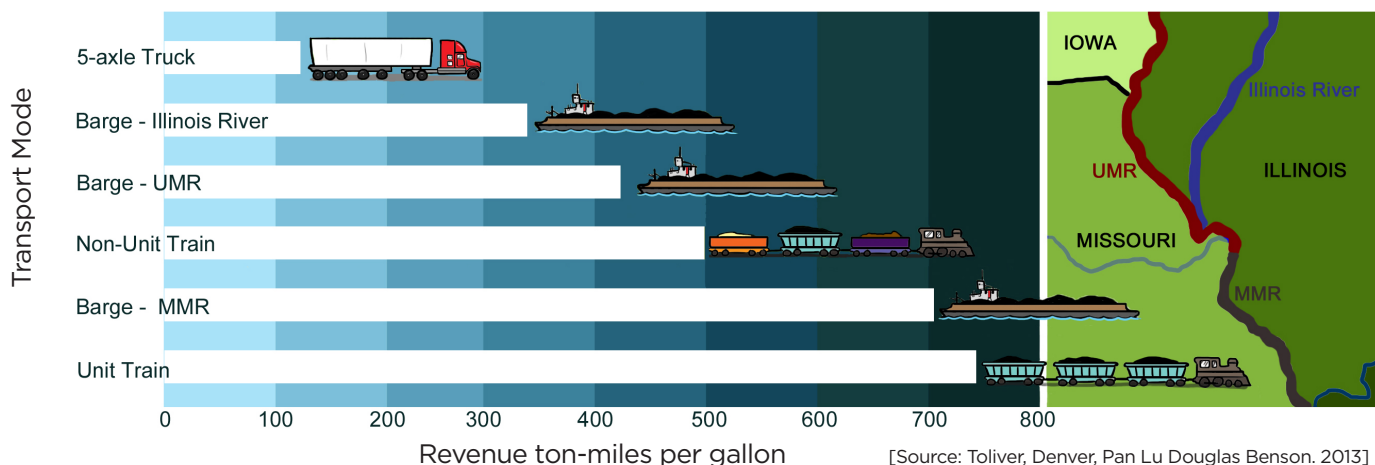
How is average fuel efficiency inflated?

The river navigation industry inflates fuel efficiency statistics by "weighting the average," which means the statistics include traffic from the Lower Mississippi River where fuel efficiency is much better. By averaging this non-local barge traffic with the traffic from the Upper Mississippi River states, the industry artificially inflates the perceived efficiency of local barge traffic.



Go online to explore our resources and learn more about the environmental impacts of navigation and how to restore the Upper Mississippi River at www.nicolletislandcoalition.org

Regional Fuel Efficiency by Transportation Mode



Unit trains are the most fuel efficient mode of transportation in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. A unit train is made up of railcars carrying the same commodity going to the same final destination.