AAR: April was challenging a month for US rail traffic

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U.S. Rail Traffic[1]
Week 18, 2020 – Ended May 2, 2020

	This Week		Year-To-Date		
	Cars	vs 2019	Cumulative	Avg/wk[2]	vs 2019
Total Carloads	**189,190**	**-29.6%**	**3,973,586**	**220,755**	**-11.8%**
Chemicals	29,739	-15.2%	573,765	31,876	-1.2%
Coal	45,806	-45.9%	1,085,871	60,326	-22.9%
Farm Products excl. Grain, and Food	13,678	-16.0%	276,828	15,379	-1.5%
Forest Products	8,923	-13.7%	172,077	9,560	-4.2%
Grain	22,653	1.6%	369,112	20,506	-6.1%
Metallic Ores and Metals	16,535	-30.0%	358,828	19,935	-7.6%
Motor Vehicles and Parts	1,985	-88.0%	208,143	11,564	-29.4%
Nonmetallic Minerals	31,322	-15.6%	535,961	29,776	-8.5%
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	9,544	-27.9%	219,485	12,194	-3.5%
Other	9,005	-5.6%	173,516	9,640	3.6%
Total Intermodal Units	**227,764**	**-14.5%**	**4,273,708**	**237,428**	**-10.9%**
Total Traffic	**416,954**	**-22.1%**	**8,247,294**	**458,183**	**-11.4%**

[1] Excludes U.S. operations of Canadian Pacific, CN and GMXT.
[2] Average per week figures may not sum to totals as a result of independent rounding.

Table of US rail traffic commodities and intermodal for the week ended May 2, 2020
Association of American Railroads

WASHINGTON — The Association of American Railroads today reported U.S. rail traffic for the week ending May 2, 2020, as well as volumes for April 2020.

U.S. railroads originated 980,535 carloads in April 2020, down 25.2%, or 329,693 carloads, from April 2019. U.S. railroads also originated 1,095,423 containers and trailers in April 2020, down 17.2%, or 227,165 units, from the same month last year. Combined U.S. carload and intermodal originations in April 2020 were 2,075,958, down 21.2%, or 556,858 carloads and intermodal units from April 2019.

In April 2020, two of the 20 carload commodity categories tracked by the AAR each month saw carload gains compared with April 2019. These were all other carloads, up 2,699 carloads or 9%; and farm products excluding grain, up 1,093 carloads or 29%. Commodities that saw declines in April 2020 from April 2019 were coal, down 154,455 carloads or 38%; motor vehicles and parts, down 72,437 carloads or 86.3%; and chemicals, down 19,786 carloads or

11.9%.

“To no one’s surprise, the pandemic made April a challenging month for rail traffic. The 25.2% year-over-year decline in total rail carloads was the worst decline for total carloads for any month since our records begin in 1989, and the 17.2% decline in intermodal loadings in April was the worst since the summer of 2009,” said AAR Senior Vice President John T. Gray. “Coal and autos were by far the worst-hit commodities in April, but declines spanned the industrial spectrum, hitting finished steel and steel scrap, chemicals, petroleum products, sand and stone, and much else. We don’t know exactly when it will happen, but our economy — and rail traffic — will rebound. No matter what, the men and women on our nation’s railroads will do their part to keep supply chains moving safely and efficiently as they link our businesses and communities to each other and to the world.”

Excluding coal, carloads were down 175,238 carloads, or 19.4%, in April 2020 from April 2019. Excluding coal and grain, carloads were down 167,802 carloads, or 21.3%.

Total U.S. carload traffic for the first four months of 2020 was 3,973,586 carloads, down 11.8%, or 532,448 carloads, from the same period last year; and 4,273,708 intermodal units, down 10.9%, or 525,462 containers and trailers, from last year.

Total combined U.S. traffic for the first 18 weeks of 2020 was 8,247,294 carloads and intermodal units, a decrease of 11.4% compared to last year.

Week Ending May 2, 2020

Total U.S. weekly rail traffic was 416,954 carloads and intermodal units, down 22.1% compared with the same week last year.

Total carloads for the week ending May 2 were 189,190 carloads, down 29.6% compared with the same week in 2019, while U.S. weekly intermodal volume was 227,764 containers and trailers, down 14.5% compared to 2019.

One of the 10 carload commodity groups posted an increase compared with the same week in 2019. It was grain, up 355 carloads, to 22,653. Commodity groups that posted decreases compared with the same week in 2019 included coal, down 38,851 carloads, to 45,806; motor vehicles and parts, down 14,506 carloads, to 1,985; and metallic ores and metals, down 7,091 carloads, to 16,535.

North American rail volume for the week ending May 2, 2020, on 12 reporting U.S., Canadian and Mexican railroads totaled 270,855 carloads, down 28.3% compared with the same week last year, and 309,731 intermodal units, down 13.4% compared with last year. Total combined weekly rail traffic in North America was 580,586 carloads and intermodal units, down 21.1%. North American rail volume for the first 18 weeks of 2020 was

11,401,713 carloads and intermodal units, down 9.9% compared with 2019.

Canadian railroads reported 67,952 carloads for the week, down 23.8%, and 69,551 intermodal units, down 6.2% compared with the same week in 2019. For the first 18 weeks of 2020, Canadian railroads reported cumulative rail traffic volume of 2,532,358 carloads, containers and trailers, down 5.8%.

Mexican railroads reported 13,713 carloads for the week, down 30.8% compared with the same week last year, and 12,416 intermodal units, down 27.7%. Cumulative volume on Mexican railroads for the first 18 weeks of 2020 was 622,061 carloads and intermodal containers and trailers, down 5% from the same point last year.