



# STATE RAIL PLAN

Public Meeting #1  
March 23, 2022



# WELCOME TO THE STATE RAIL PLAN PUBLIC MEETING #1



Please ensure your microphones are muted



To share a comment or question, please raise your hand using the “reactions” button or type it in the chat box



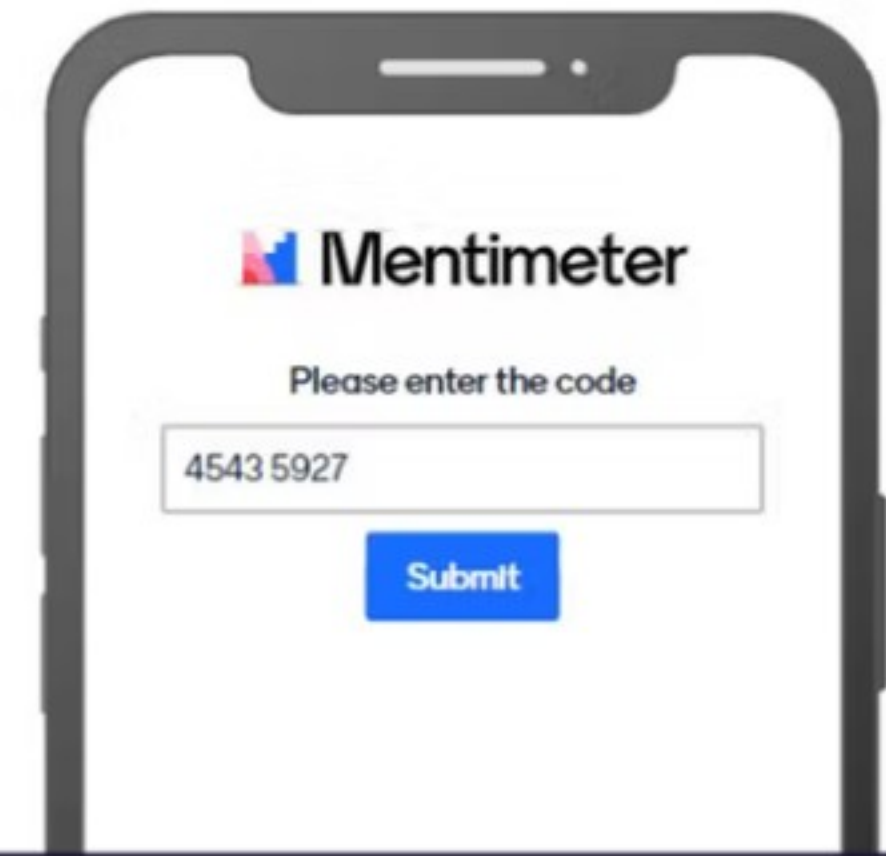
If called upon to speak you will be unmuted, please turn video on (if possible)



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# AGENDA

- » Project Team
- » Draft Vision and Goals
- » Plan Purpose
- » Plan Approach and Schedule
- » Freight and Passenger Rail Profile
- » Rail Trends Discussion
- » Next Steps
- » Q&A



# PROJECT TEAM

## Maine Department of Transportation

- Nathan Howard – Project Manager SRP
- Nathan Moulton – Director Office of Freight and Passenger Services

## Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

- Patricia Quinn – Executive Director
- William Gayle – Grant and Policy Administrator

## Cambridge Systematics

- Lisa Destro – CS Project Manager
- Andreas Aeppli – CS Principal in Charge
- Leah Pickett – CS Deputy Project Manager



# Why do you think freight and passenger rail service is important to the State of Maine?





# DRAFT STATE RAIL PLAN VISION

*Maine's rail system and its multimodal connections will...*

Meet the evolving transportation needs of our residents, our visitors and our customers and provide **safe** and **reliable** mobility for people and goods to support **environmental sustainability, economic opportunity** and **quality of life**



# DRAFT STATE RAIL PLAN GOALS



Provide for and improve the **safety** and **security** of transportation users and the transportation system



Improve **mobility** and **accessibility** of goods and people through enhanced **multimodal connectivity**



**Preserve** and **strengthen** the existing rail system **infrastructure** to efficiently serve the **long-term needs** of Maine's residents, visitors and industry



**Expand** Maine's **freight** and **passenger rail service**



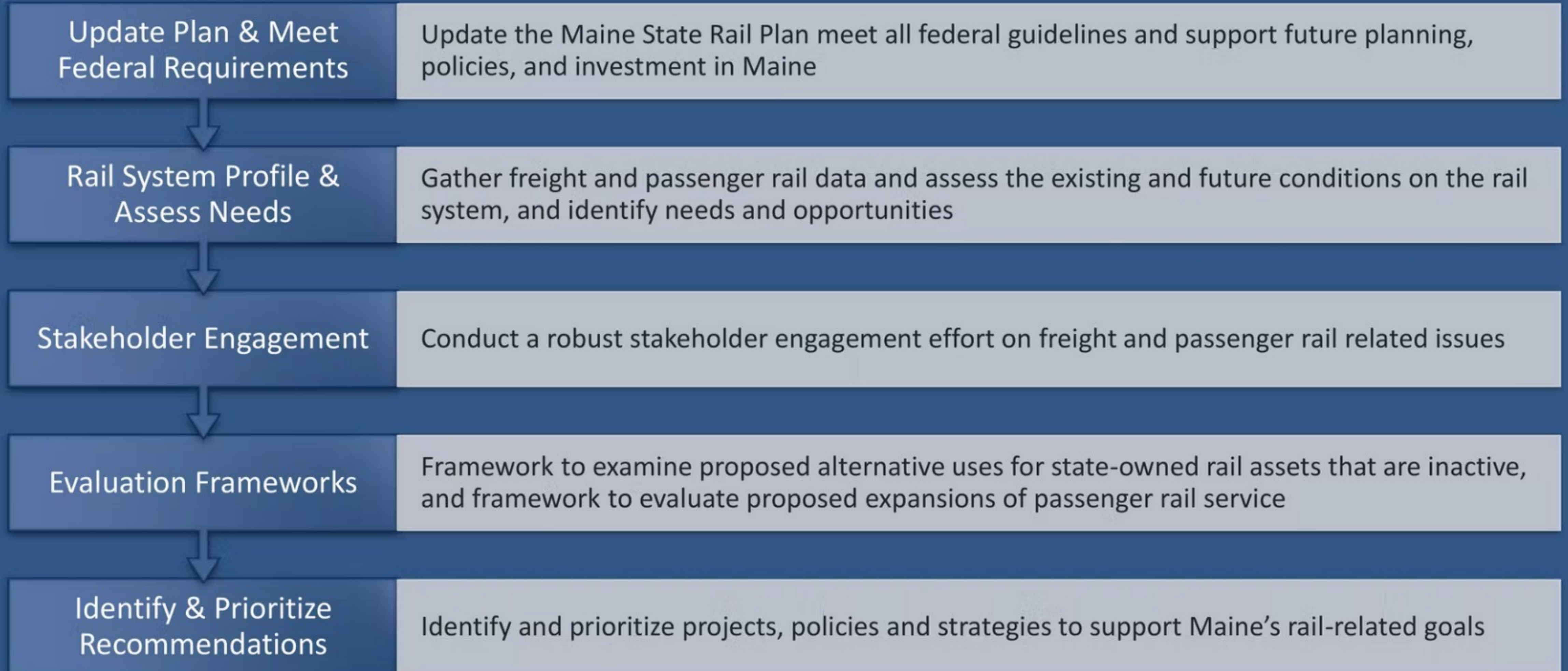
Improve Maine's **quality of life** and **economic competitiveness** through transportation investments that promote **energy efficiency, environmental sustainability** and **equity**



Seek sources of **adequate, stable** and **predictable funding** to maintain and improve the rail system

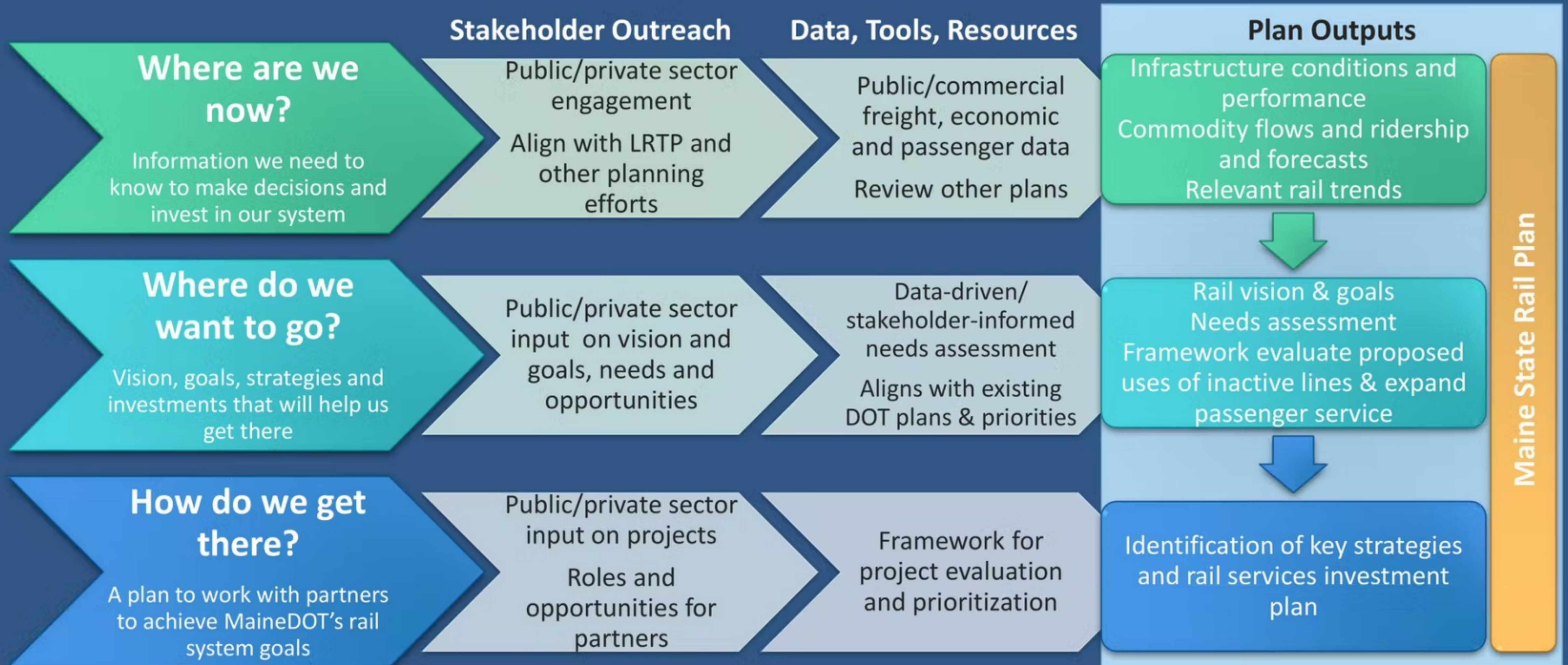


# PURPOSE OF THE STATE RAIL PLAN



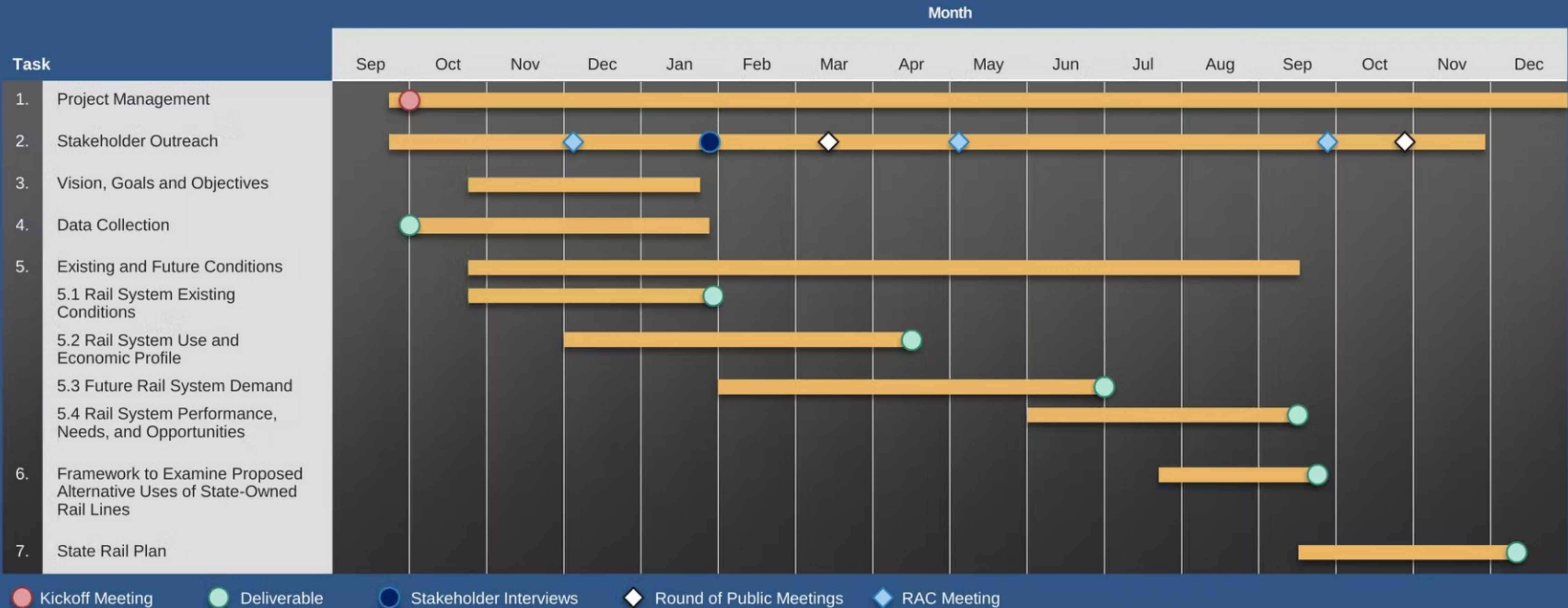


# PLAN TECHNICAL APPROACH





# PLAN SCHEDULE





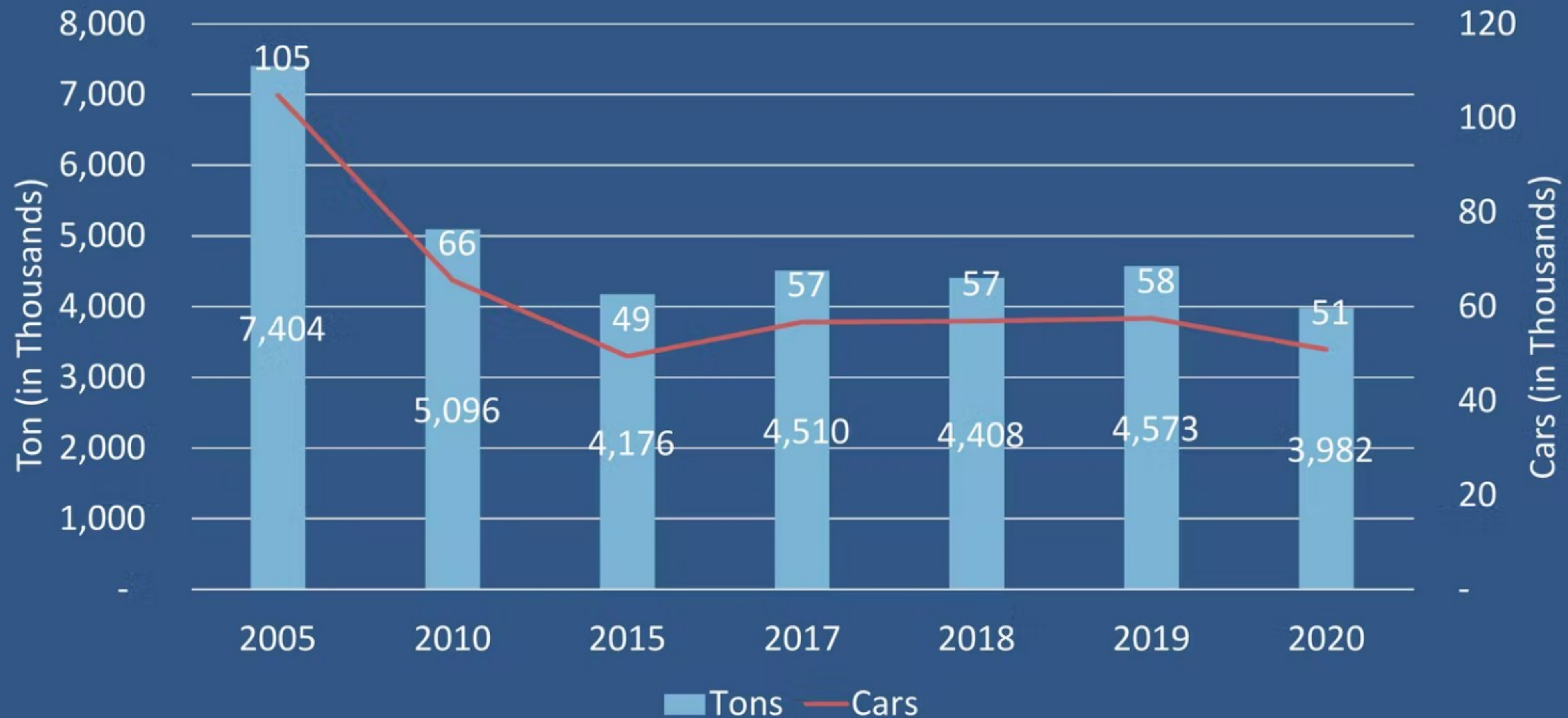


# MAINE RAIL PROFILE

- » Freight rail commodity flow historical trends
- » Passenger rail ridership and OTP historical trends



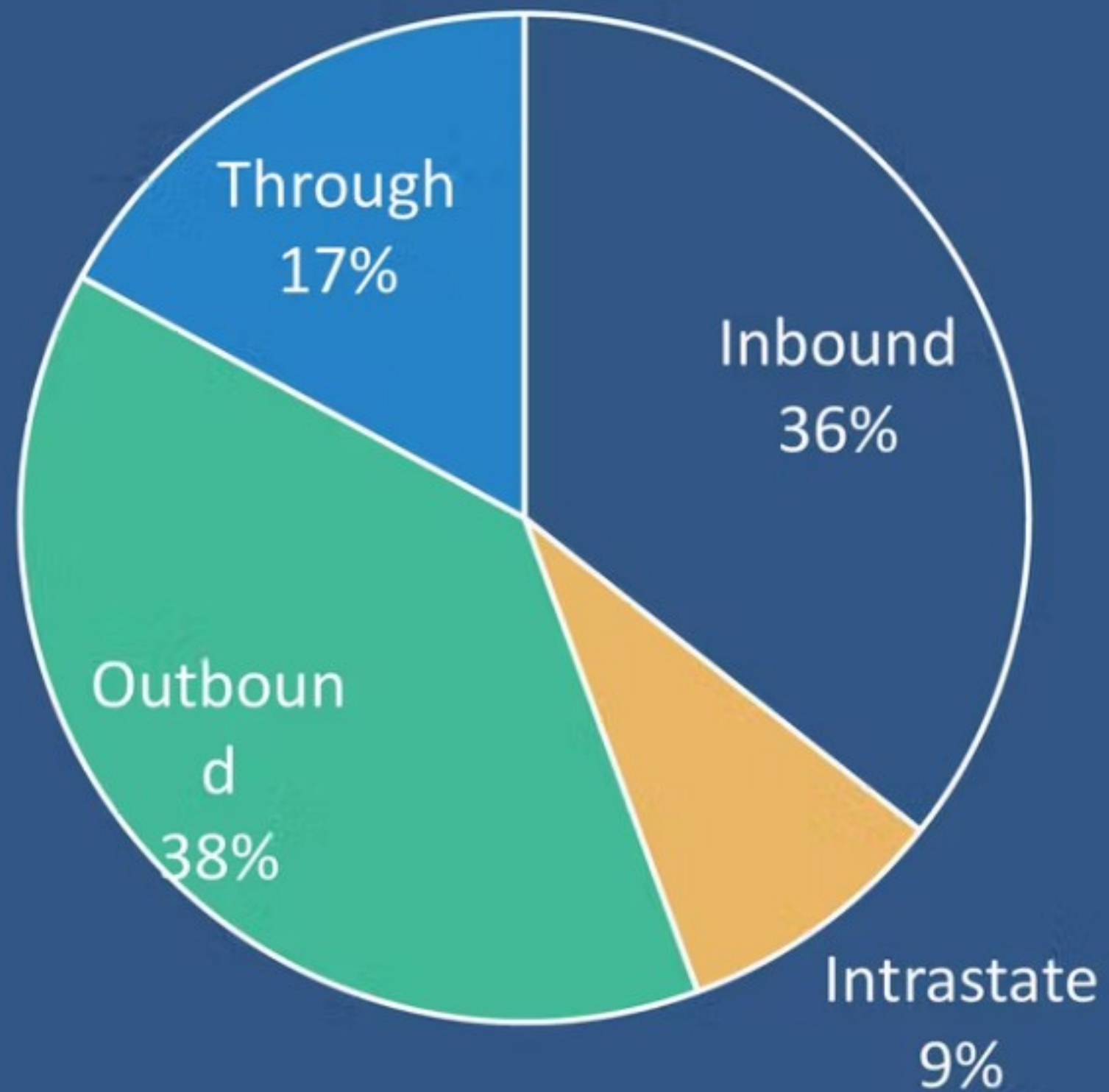
# 2005-2020 MAINE RAIL FREIGHT



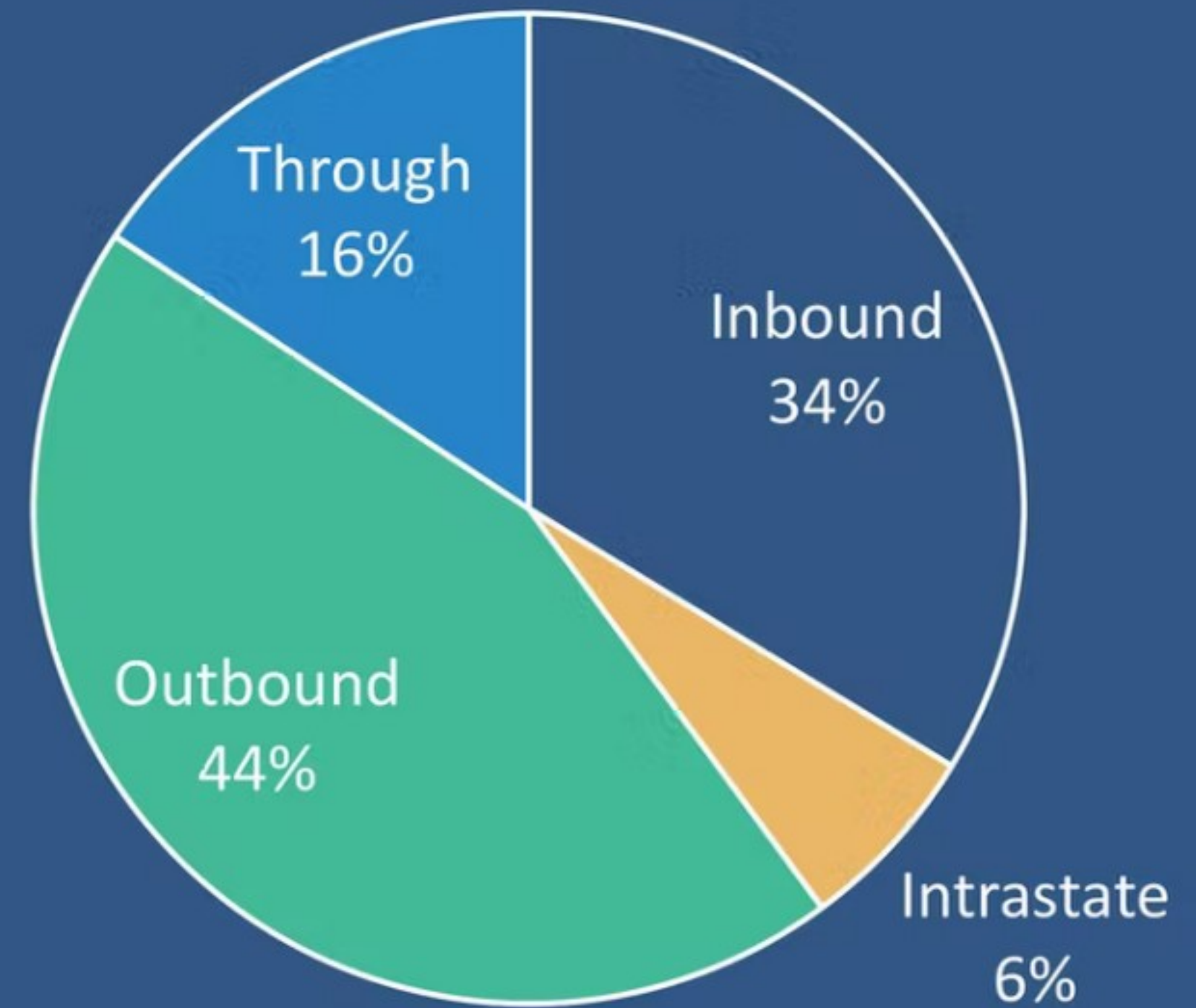


# DIRECTIONAL SPLIT

2019 Tons



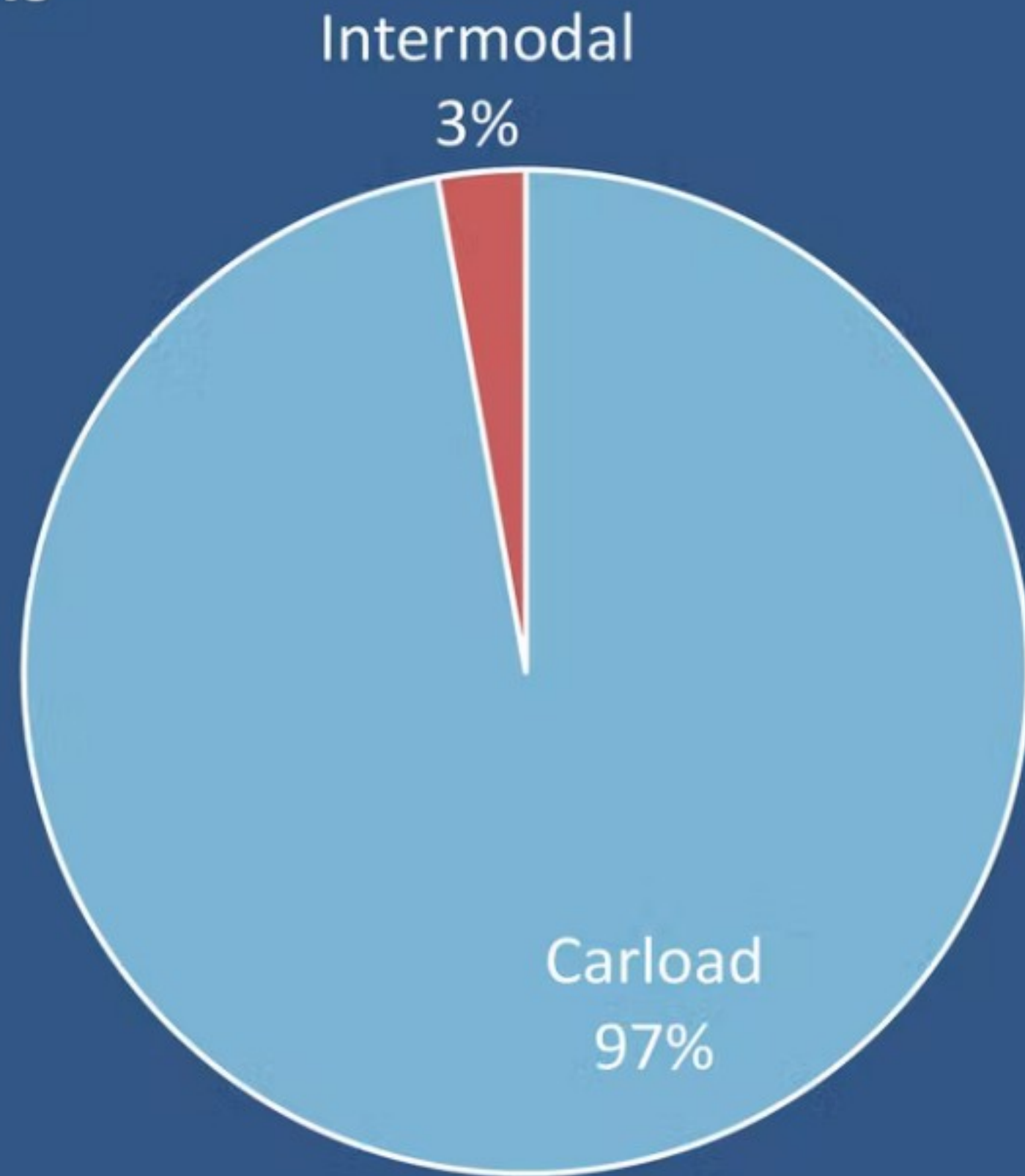
2019 Cars



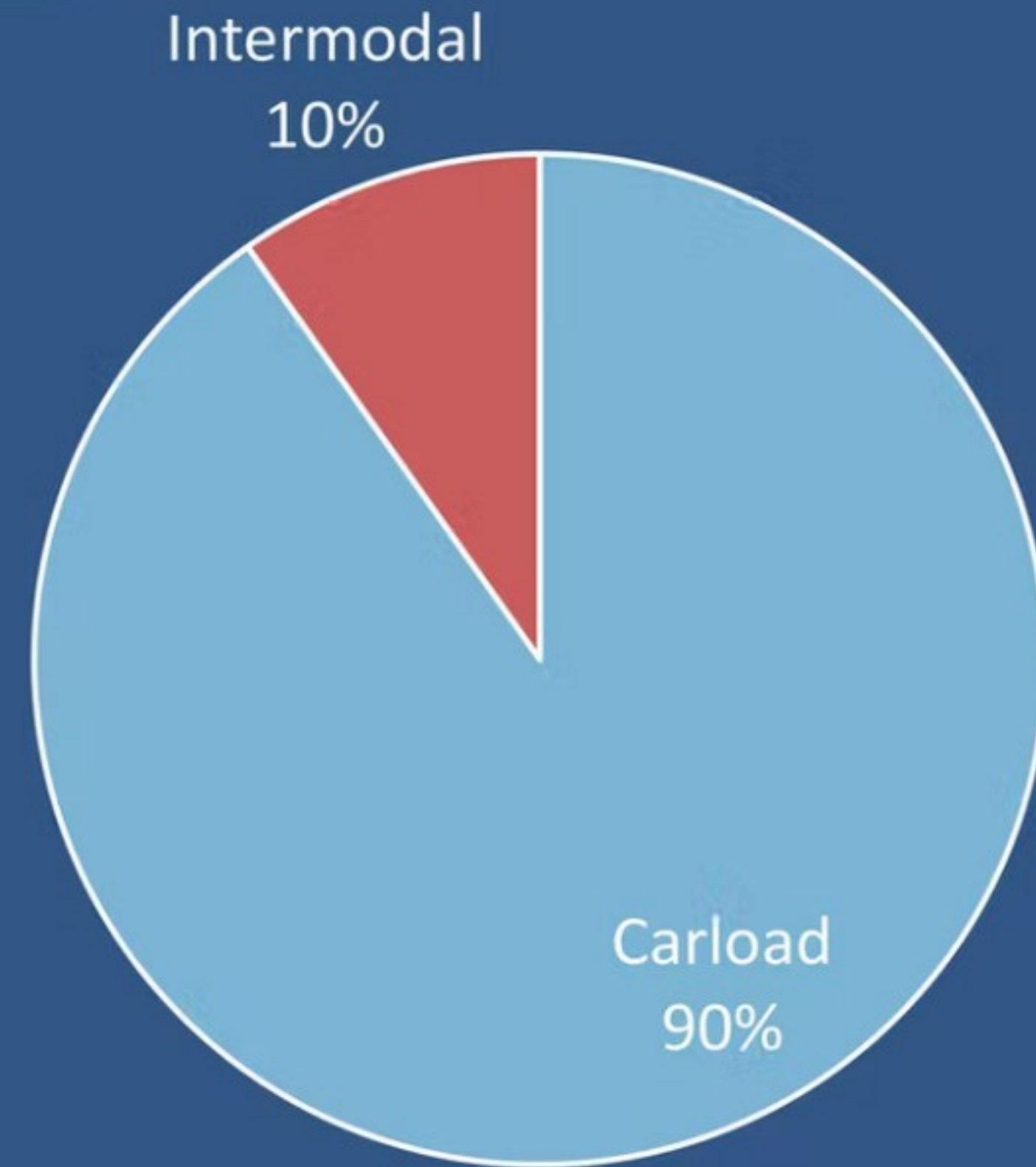


# CARLOAD & INTERMODAL SPLIT

2019 Tons



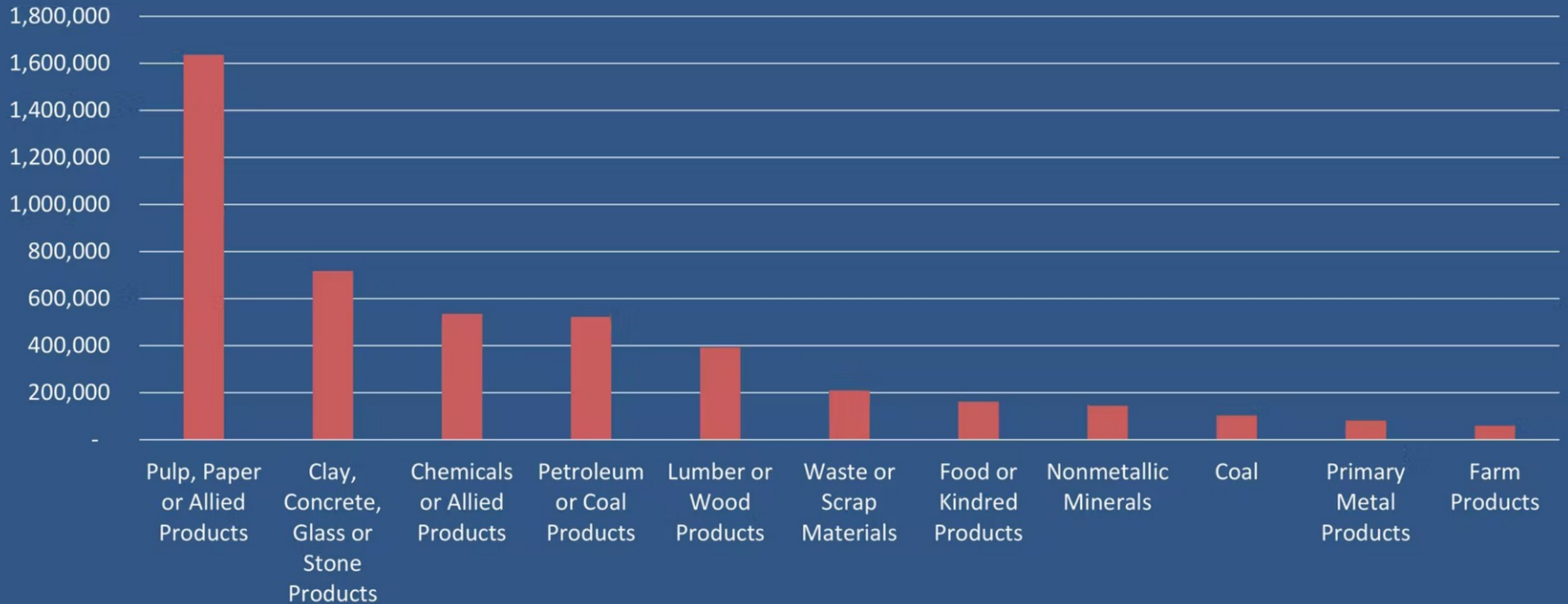
2019 Cars





# TOP COMMODITIES

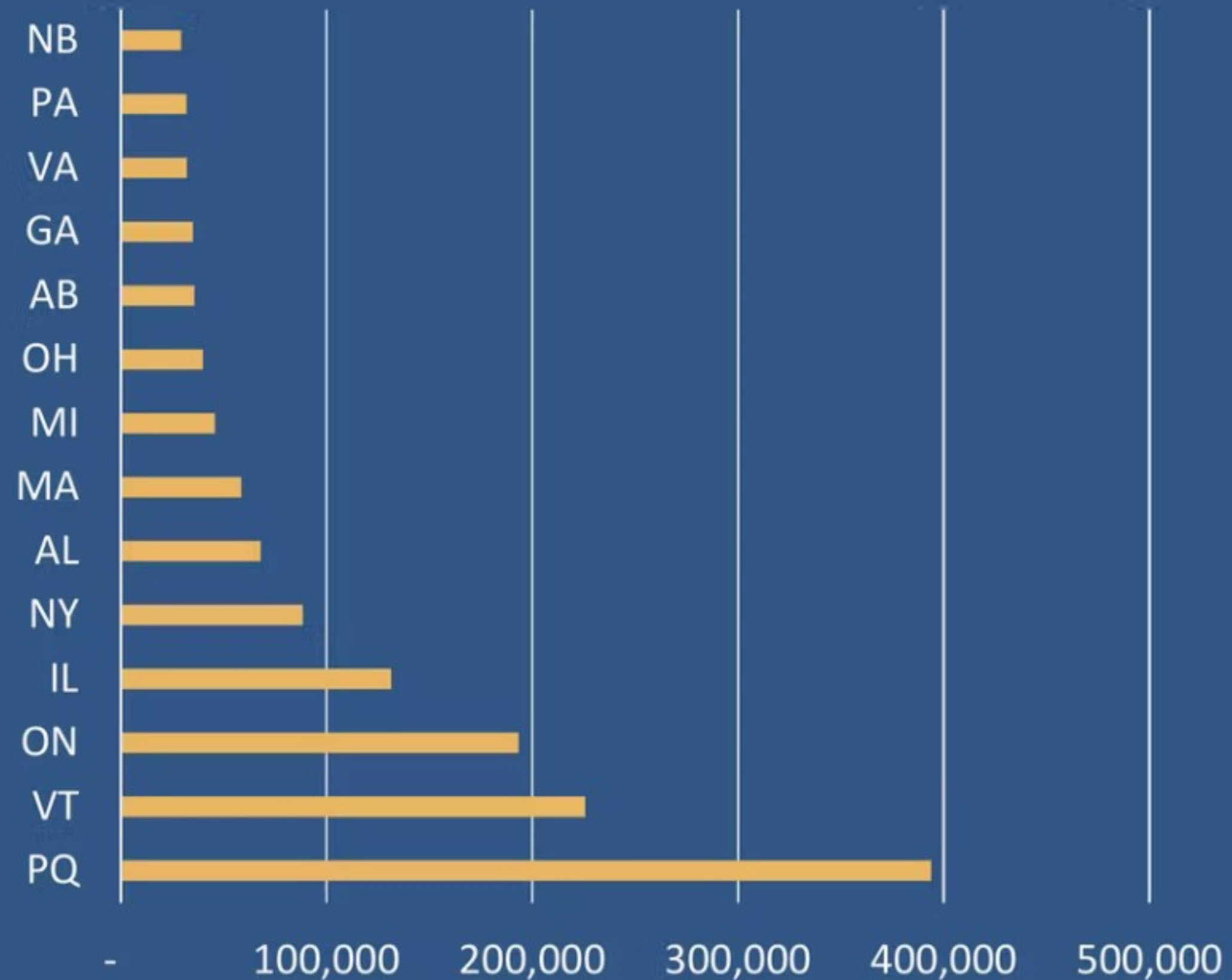
2019 Tons



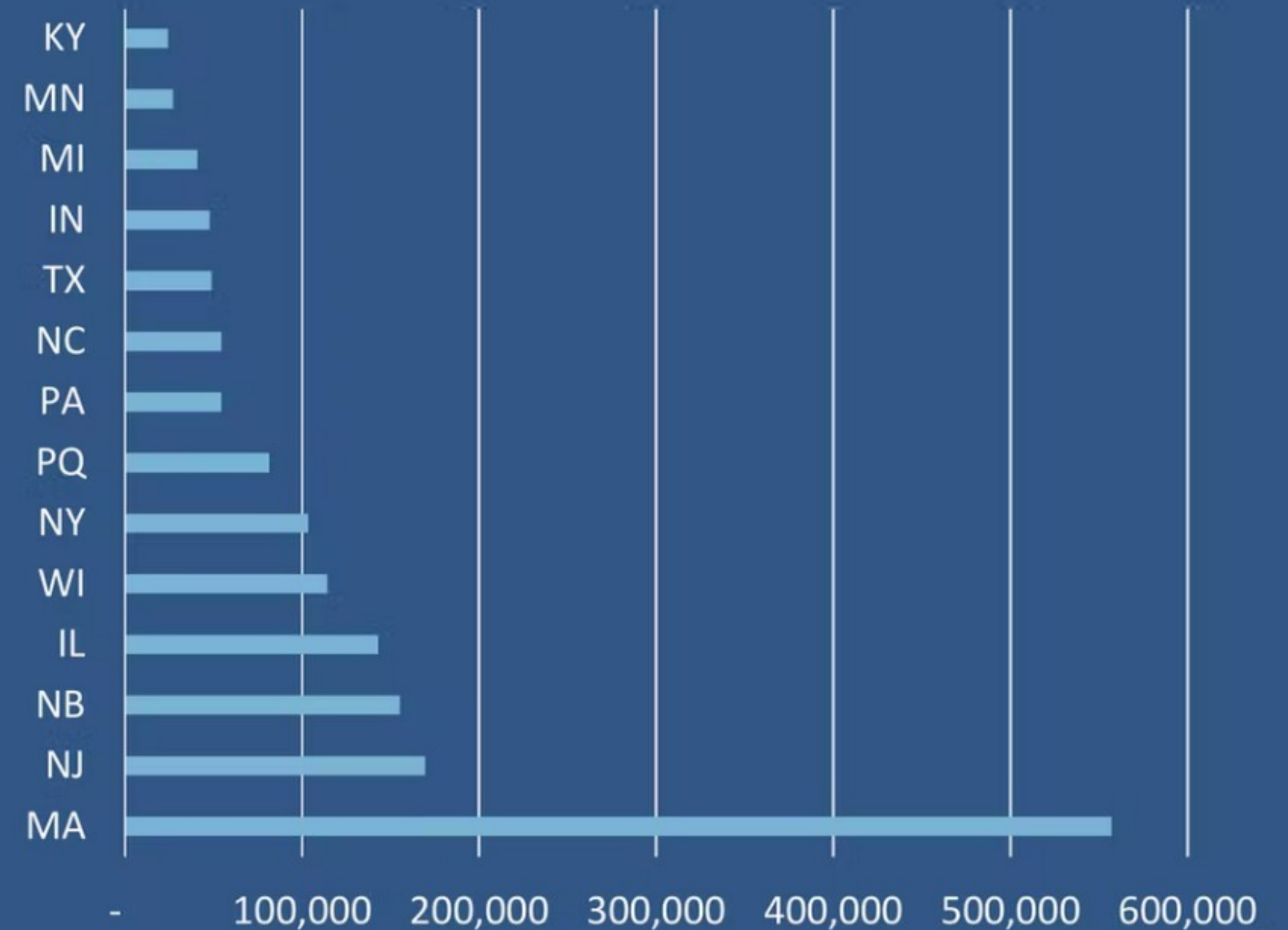


# TOP INBOUND & OUTBOUND TRADING PARTNERS

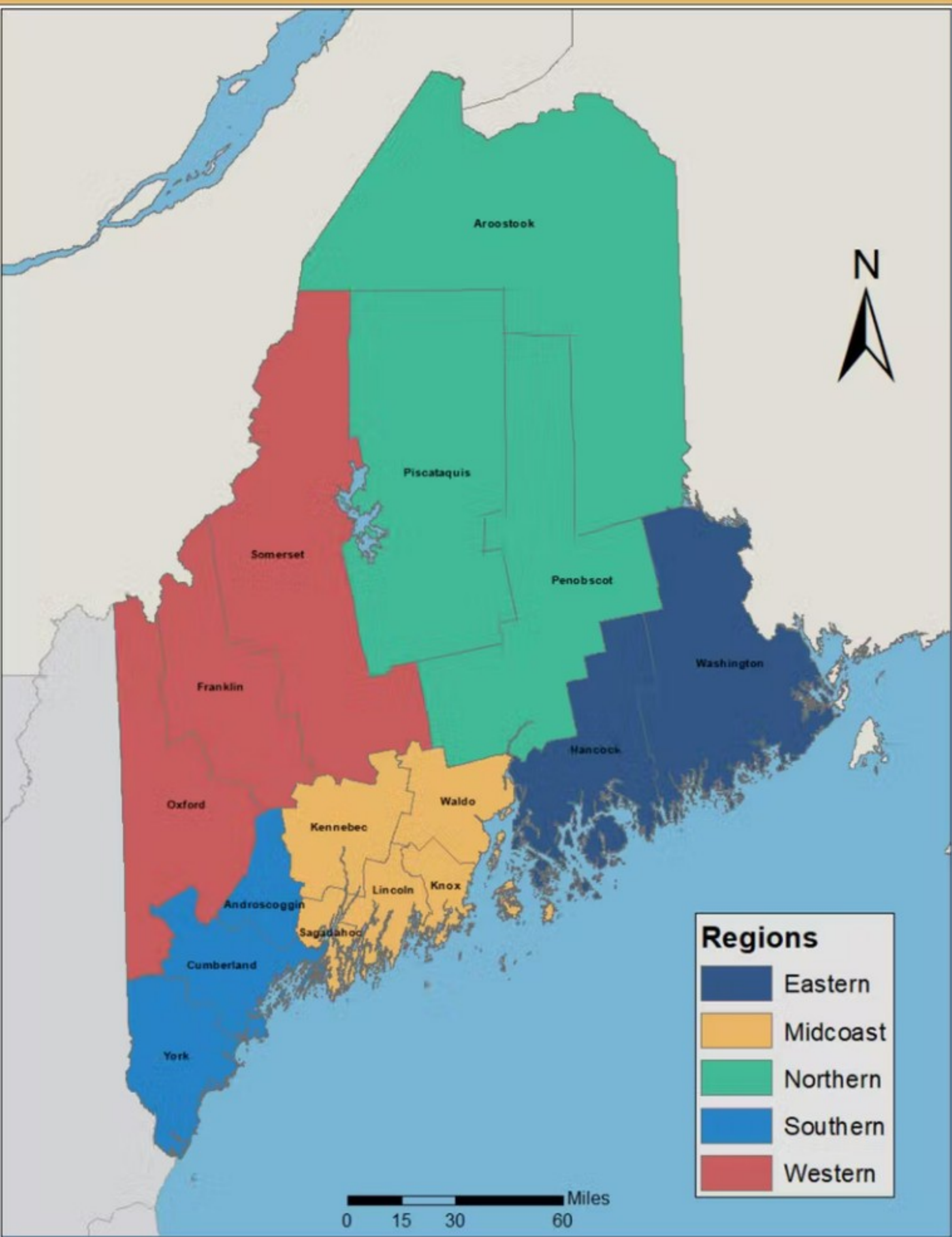
2019 Inbound Tons



2019 Outbound Tons

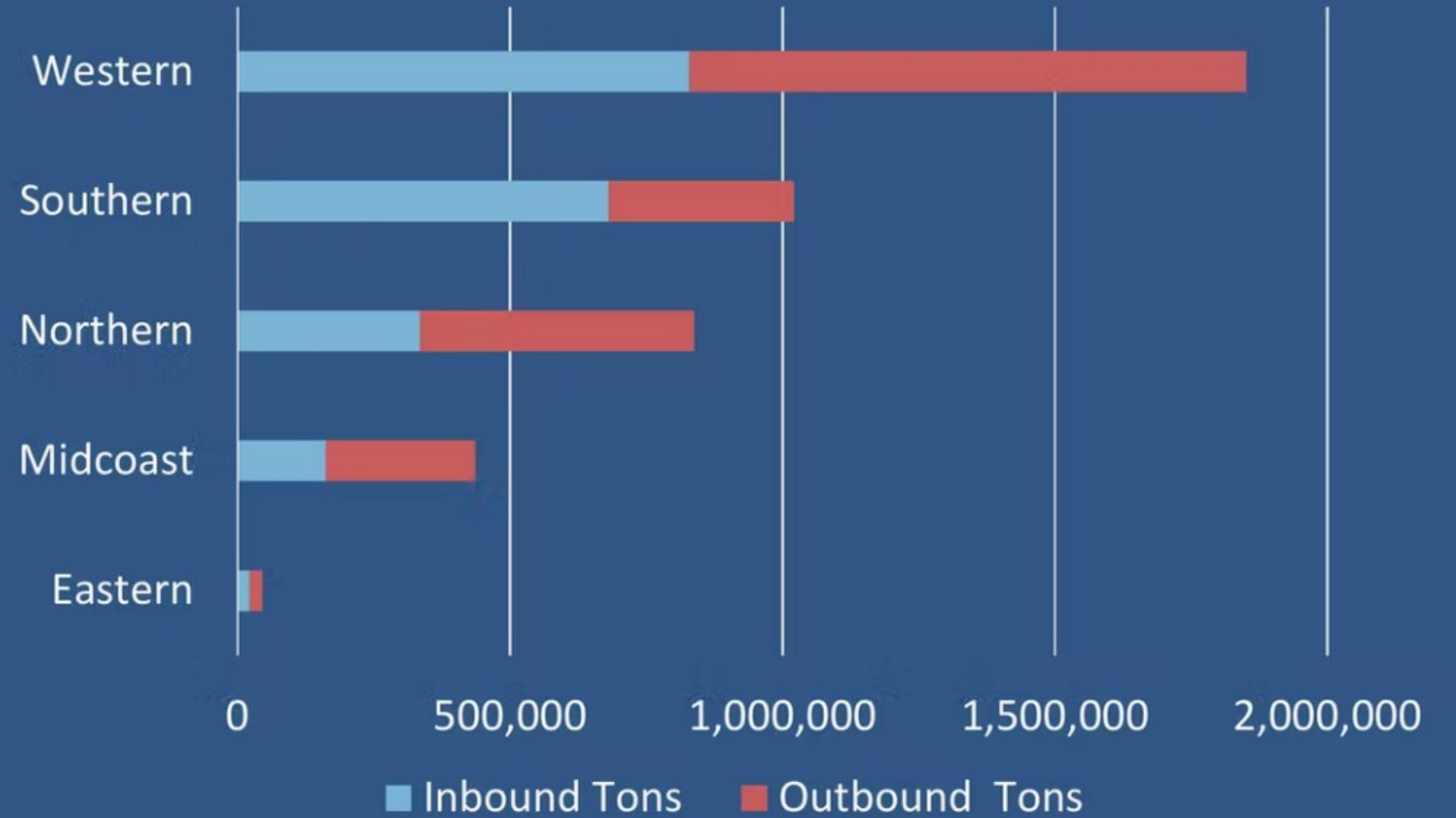






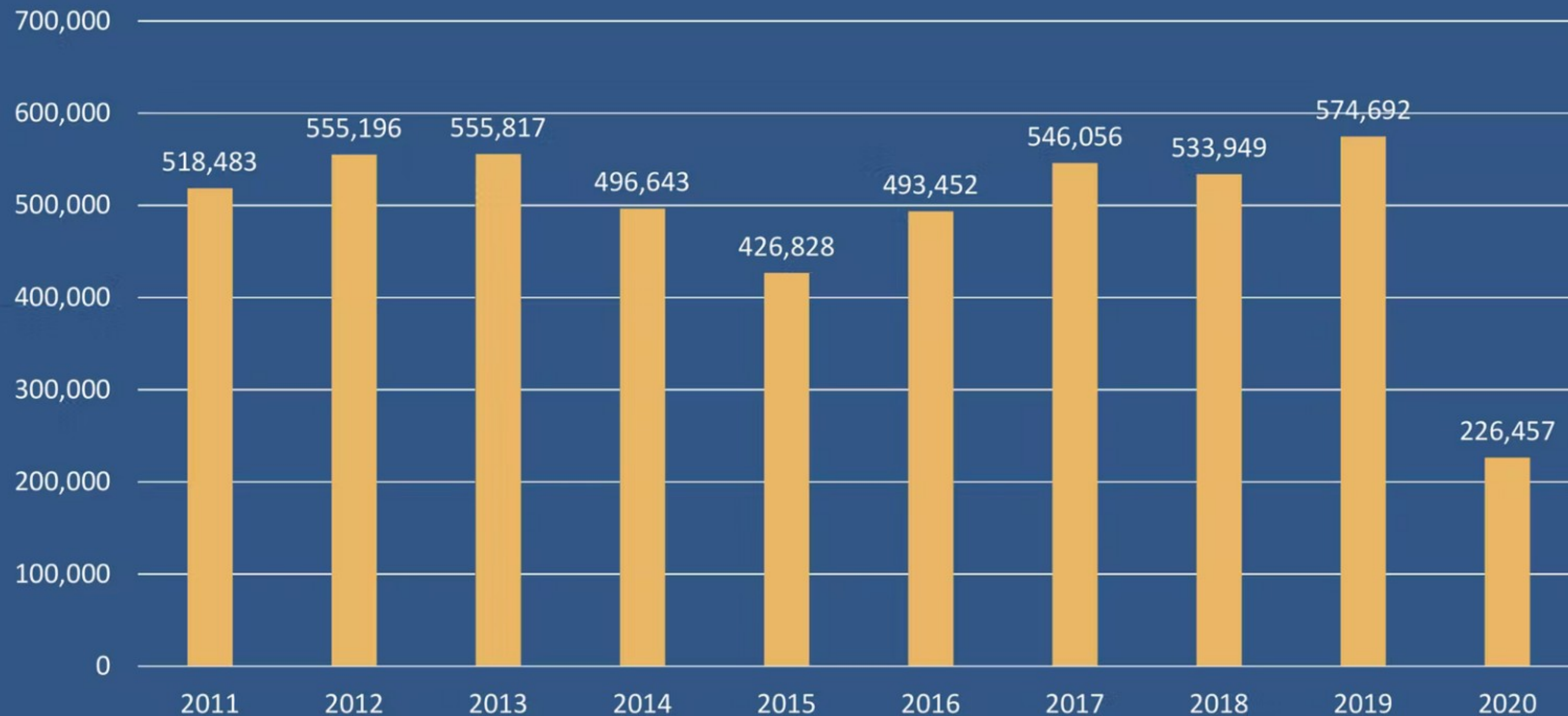
# RAIL FREIGHT BY MAINE REGION

2019 Tons





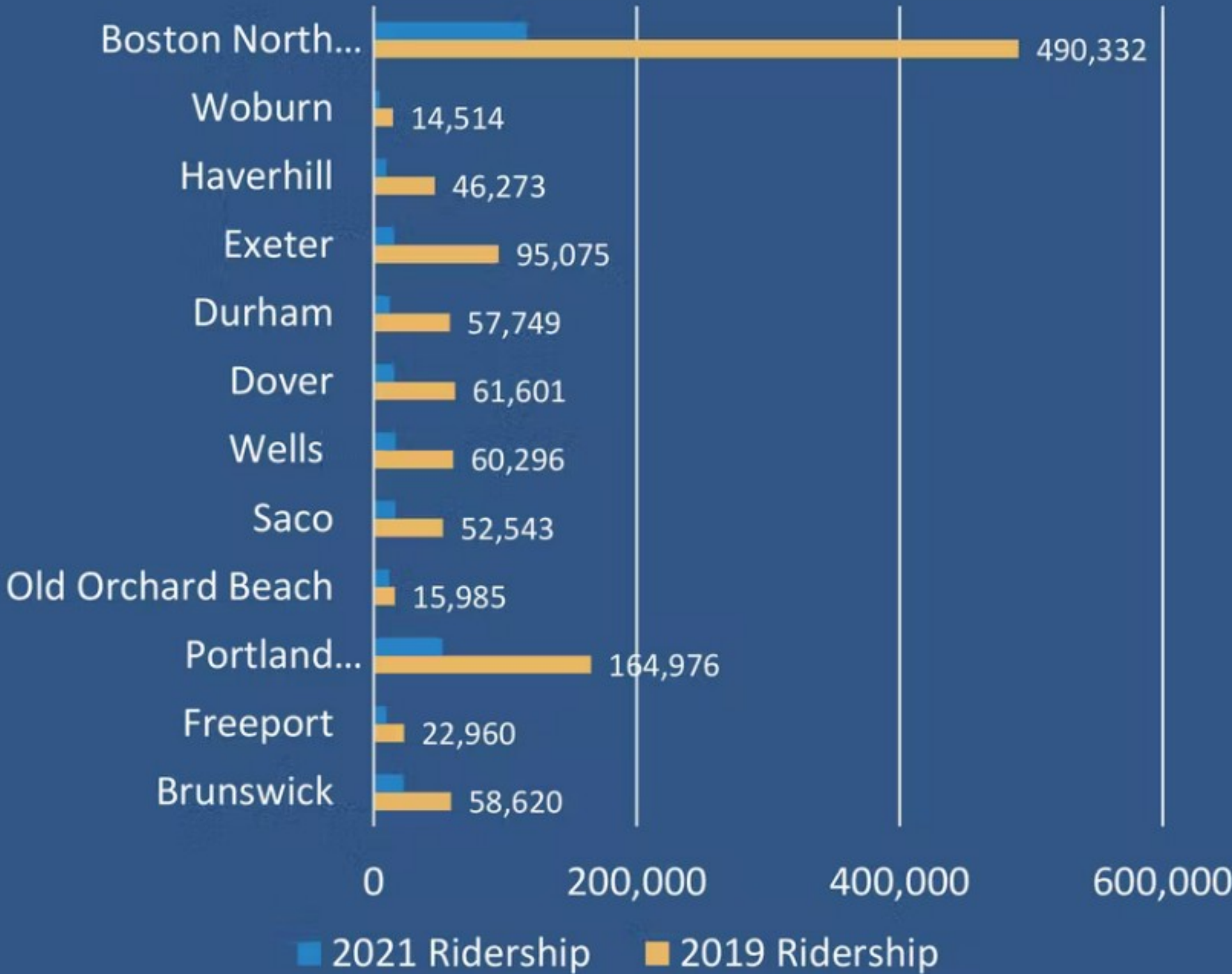
# DOWNEASTER RIDERSHIP



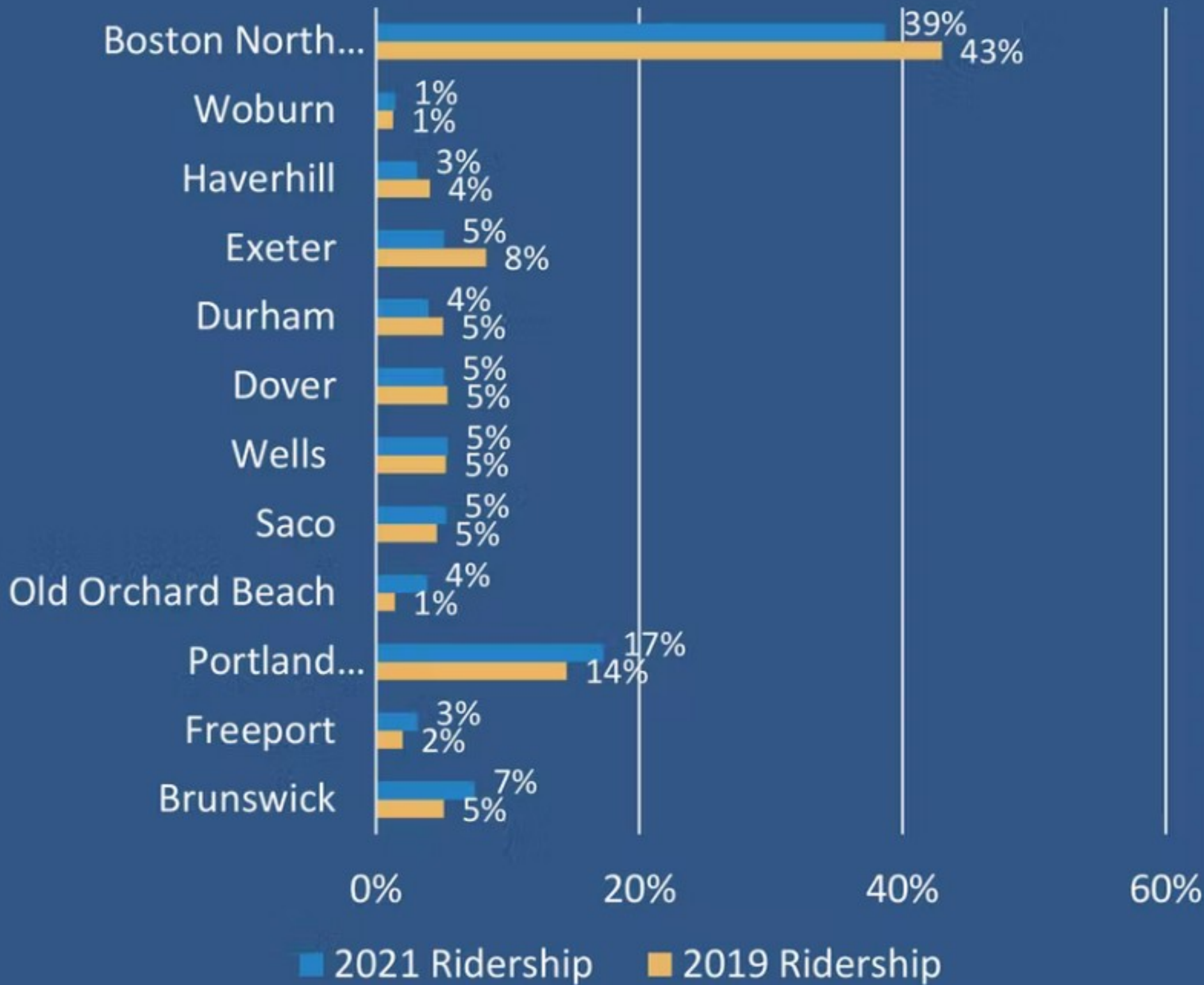


# DOWNEASTER RIDERSHIP BY STATION

Total Boardings and Alightings by Station: 2019 and 2021 (through October)

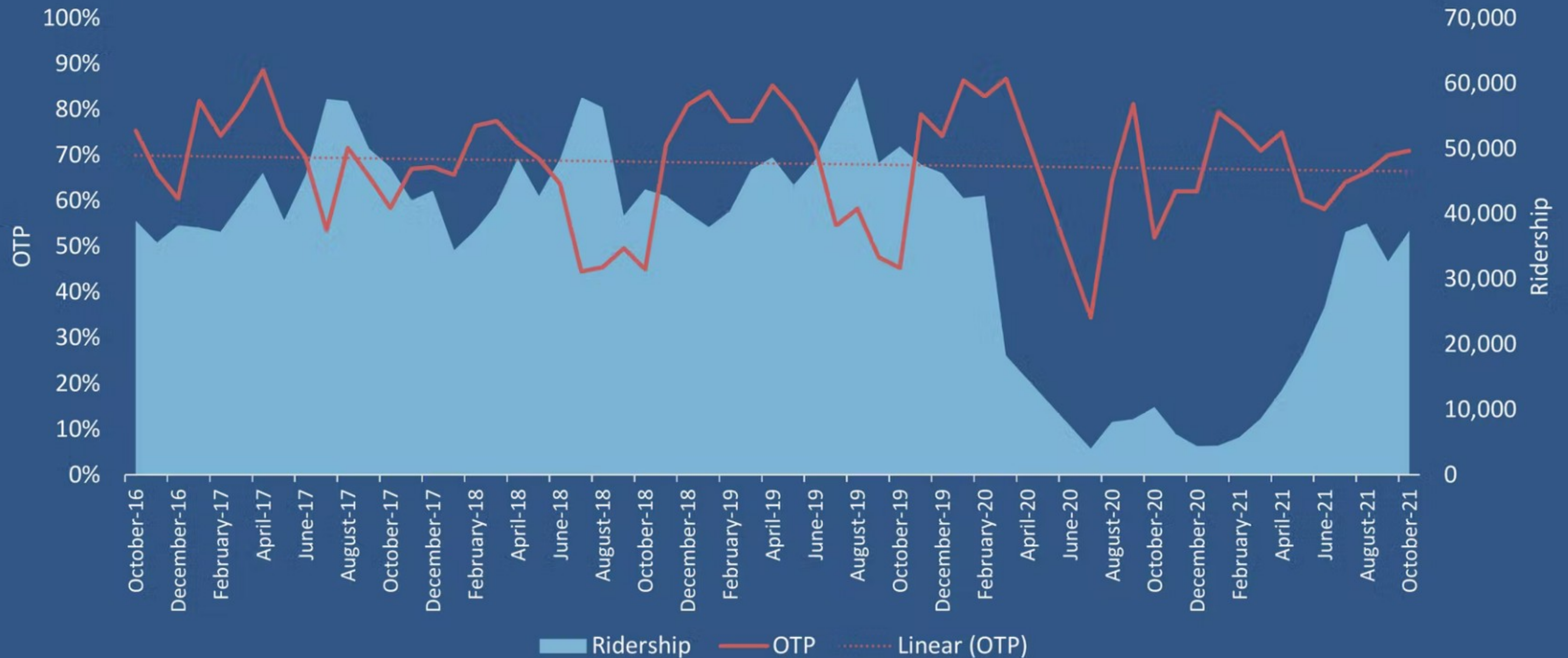


% of Total Boardings and Alightings by Station: 2019 and 2021 (through October)





# DOWNEASTER ON TIME PERFORMANCE





# PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE OPTIONS CONSIDERED FOR RIDERSHIP FORECAST

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Existing service reflecting  
completion of Wells Area  
Improvement Project

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New Portland station constructed  
on main line, additional stop at  
Falmouth

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Rockland Branch service

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Additional round-trips and reduced  
travel time



# TRENDS IMPACTING RAIL

## Market Trends

- Industry: forest, construction, energy, chemicals, agricultural, intermodal
- International trade
- Fuel costs
- Land use changes

## Consumer Trends

- E-commerce
- Consumer spending as a result of COVID-19
- Demographics
- Residents/visitors travel patterns

## Freight Industry Trends

- Rail industry strategies for growth
- Longer trains
- Truck driver shortage

## Regulatory Issues

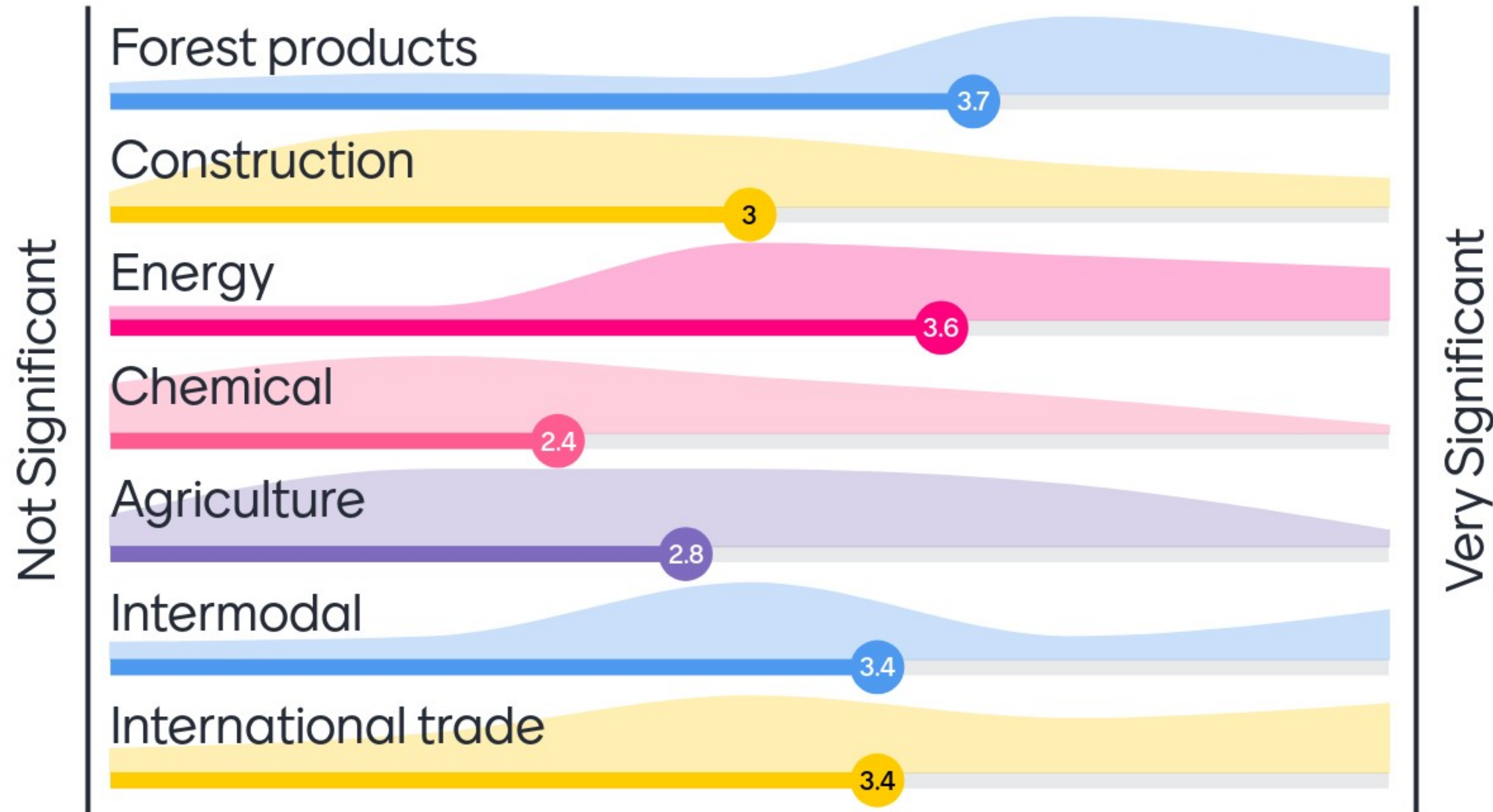
- Truck size and weight
- Safety
- Changes in economic regulation
- Pan Am Railways/CSX merger

## Technology Trends

- Positive Train Control version 2
- Electrification
- Autonomous trucks and trains

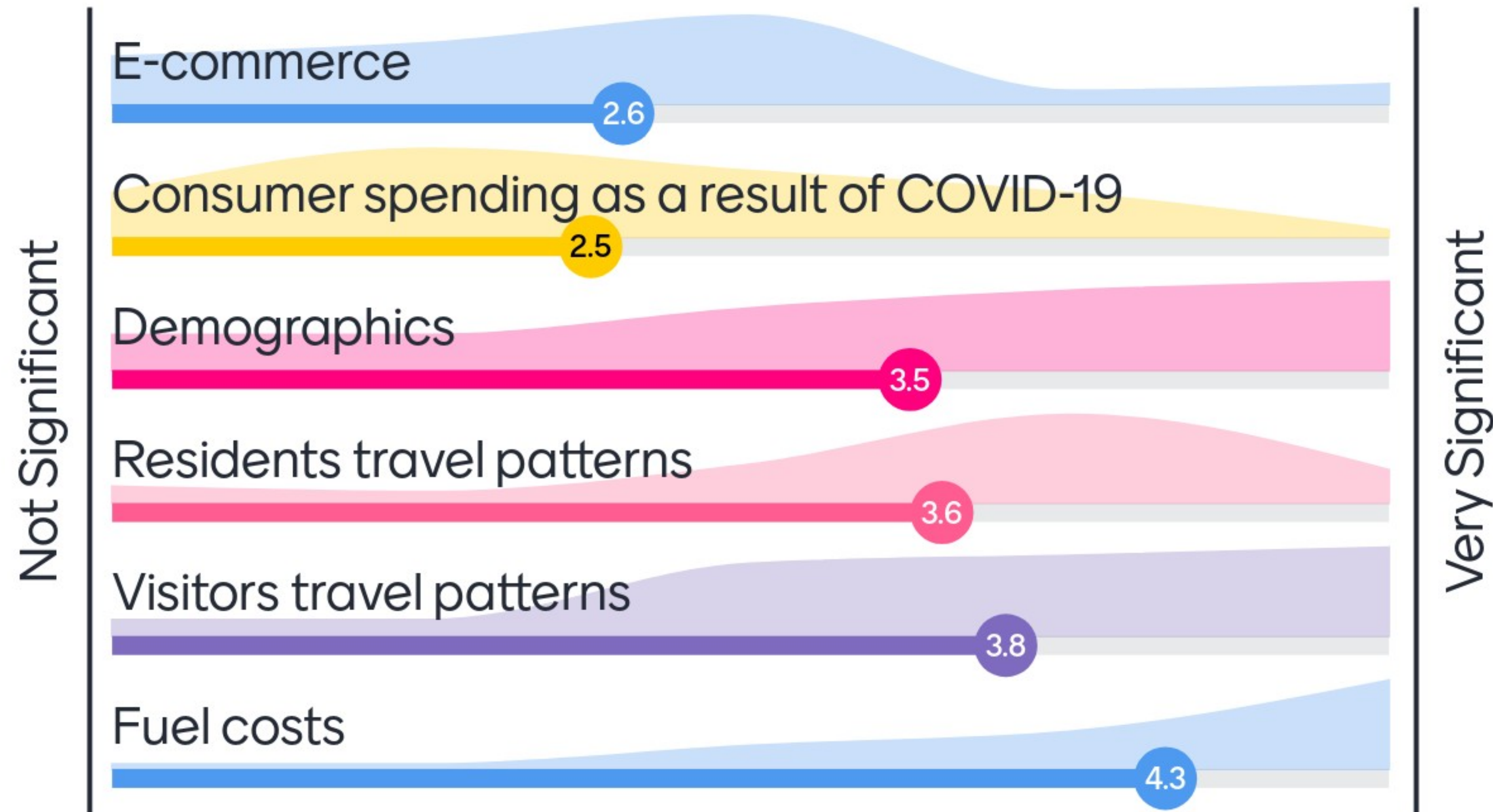


# How significant of an impact do you think these *Market Trends* will have on freight rail service in Maine?





# How significant of an impact do you think these *Consumer Trends* will have on rail service in Maine?





# Which of the *Consumer Trends* are most important to you?

## Please explain why.

E-commerce

Consumer spending due to pandemic

Demographics

Residents travel patterns

Visitors travel patterns

Fuel costs

Old people like alternatives to driving.

My generation Millennials and also Zoomers are driving less and owning cars less statistically

demographics The State of Maine has a very diminishing population the further north you go.

demographics- many more people dont drive anymore- older and younger- younger people are more likely to use mass transit now

Do people actually make the wages in maine to be able to afford to use passenger rail?

2020 census data shows that towns like Biddeford/Saco, Brunswick, and Westbrook/Portland are the fastest growing areas in Maine and are all served by the Downeaster

The most important to me are fuel costs and residents travel patterns. I believe there is a real market towards business travellers in Central Maine headed for Boston, and as businesses develop in Central and Southern Maine that travel will increase.

Climate change

Demographics matters, young people like myself are increasingly choosing transit, having strong transit may help retain and attract youth.



# Which of the *Consumer Trends* are most important to you?

## Please explain why.

E-commerce

Consumer spending due to pandemic

Demographics

Residents travel patterns

Visitors travel patterns

Fuel costs

Demographics includes younger and older population that take advantage of rail

Fuel & energy: more people will be seeking alternative trans modes. Also POTUS is behind rail expansion

Car free living is a priority for people

Residents travel patterns, especially for rural regions of Maine so this way each town can be connected to some form of rail transport. Rail spurs for businesses and smaller passenger routes connect the state to the rest of the nation, and more towns

Resident travel patterns - ease of access to Boston (without a car)

no public transit options for rural communities

Maine opposes population density and housing density, so how do you address.

Passenger rail can allow expedited delivery using the passenger rail timetables

Maine's sprawl and diesel emissions per passenger for rural rail travel impacts climate change more than passenger vehicles.



# Which of the *Consumer Trends* are most important to you?

## Please explain why.

E-commerce

Consumer spending due to pandemic

Demographics

Residents travel patterns

Visitors travel patterns

Fuel costs

Cheaper and safer form of transport.

AMTRAK EXPANSION IS INEVITABLE!!

Residents travel patterns. I'm hopeful we're seeing a trend toward more flexibility in travel to modes besides cars, as people place more value on efficiency and safety.

I believe visitors would take the train to Maine if they flew into Boston, or even NYC.

Connecting

There are too many stops from Portland to Boston. Non stop round trips would encourage more residents to use the train vs driving.

Resident travel plans—alternative to heavy road traffic around Portland; prefer train to driving.

To answer your question, yes, people do make enough money. It's only \$3 to get from Saco to Portland. It's also only \$3 to get from Portland to Brunswick. Very affordable!

Mainers want alternatives to driving.



# Which of the *Consumer Trends* are most important to you?

## Please explain why.

E-commerce

Consumer spending due to pandemic

Demographics

Residents travel patterns

Visitors travel patterns

Fuel costs

for those seeking car free lifestyle

Visitor travel patterns are going to be one of the more driving factors. We have a tourist based economy and being able to catch a train after arriving to the state by plane or ship to several popular destinations could further drive up rail use.

People want MDOT to spend taxpayer dollars on things other than roads.

1) Visitors travel patterns: The train is an attractive alternative to driving by car. 2) Fuel costs: The train is appealing when gasoline costs are high (like currently).

Cost of gas and a less stressful way to travel out of State

Zoning Density doesn't support consumer trends. Most Maine towns don't want density.

Road congestion and visitors vs residents knowledge of routes is exacerbated by lack of transit support to shopping and airports

Electrified rail and or CNG is immune to cost of oil

As the amount of e-commerce changes, up or down, it will have an impact on how much and where goods are transported



# Which of the *Consumer Trends* are most important to you?

## Please explain why.

E-commerce

Consumer spending due to pandemic

Demographics

Residents travel patterns

Visitors travel patterns

Fuel costs

Visitors travel patterns: Need a better connection between Boston North & South stations to enable single-ride travel between Maine and points south of Boston.

We have to address climate crisis

It's a great way to get to the airport! Take the train to Portland then Uber to the jet port or take it to Boston and take the blue line to Logan

Are you going to address specific climate change risks, ie sea level rise?

its the environment!!!

Efficient passenger rail can increase people visiting the state

Elderly people often have difficult driving so passenger rail is important with the aging population

Fuel Costs - Changing the way Freight is handled across the country.

Consumer spending: The Downeaster is low-cost compared to driving!



# How significant of an impact do you think these *additional trends* will have on rail service in Maine?





# Are there any additional trends that should be considered in the Plan?

rural public transportation please!!

make sure no rails are torn up for trails

Young people not owning cars/ everyone riding bikes

MUCH more local passenger rail services via commuter rail and rail shuttles, as well as rail spurs to encourage local economic growth.

Increased urbanization if that isn't explicitly stated in demographics section.

Active transportation is becoming more popular and need multimodal support

The willingness of local towns and cities to fund access to passenger rail.

Changes in commuting patterns throughout the day post-COVID

We're seeing more public transit electrifying their services while the Downeaster still relies on diesel



# Are there any additional trends that should be considered in the Plan?

Rising housing costs/ the housing crisis

Bike parking facilities

The willingness of local towns and cities to zone at a density to support passenger rail as a condition of services.

Work with Private Shipping Companies to handle distribution of freight. Trains are good for hauling big loads, but terrible at getting the goods to the final destination.

Specific climate change risks, ie sea level rise. Maine DOT is raising Route 1 in Scarborough - what will they propose for the parallel railroad.

Creation of new ports to alleviate port congestion

People will finally be sick of funding road projects that inevitably cause induced demand and more congestion

Alternative passenger transportation: bus service, personal cars

Environmental trend re global warming. POTUS is behind rail expansion



# Are there any additional trends that should be considered in the Plan?

Active transportation facilities to connect to passenger rail

minimizing environmental impact for passengers

Rail conditions in rural areas and the impact of heritage railroads and rail lines.

Passenger rail to Quebec, please!

Lack of parking in Portland

Congress will be spending loads on Rail Xtransport

Need to decrease CO2 emissions

support light rail opportunities in populated regions.  
Increase rural connectivity.

Fuel costs



# Are there any additional trends that should be considered in the Plan?

Clustering manufacturing and distribution private investment near rail infrastructure and not subsidizing sprawl.

Electrification is extremely important

Expanded passenger services to Bangor or Ellsworth would help summer traffic to Acadia

TOD around Downeaster stations should be promoted

Light rail from Portland to Westbrook

People will be sick of the High Cost of Free Parking

e-bikes make connecting to transit easier for people who live further away, but traffic separated infrastructure is needed so people can do it safely

connect rural areas with intermodal to trains.

demographic impact; people from away purchasing homes; connections to variety of transportation; move away from autos



# Are there any additional trends that should be considered in the Plan?

Intermodal Access

The cities served by the Downeaster are some of the fastest growing in Maine

Creating transportation networks connecting interstate rail with branch lines and bus networks

Include package service on passenger rail

Improving accessibility of transportation options

Stop converting rail lines into trails.

Capital concentrates. The Downeaster allows people to access major job markets

infrastructure plan just passed gives more funds available for rail

build it and they will come must be the mentality



# Are there any additional trends that should be considered in the Plan?

People will realize that true multi-modalism is the only way to reduce congestion

Utilizing rail lines that have been unused for decades as active transportation and recreation facilities

Move away from commuter rail and instead offer service all day

Rain & Trail. Why cant we have both?

Make NH and MA pay for their riders.

Are there ways to make distribution centers build close to existing rail lines rather than bringing the rail to them.

GLOBAL WARMING POPULATION GROWTH

An integrated system with local public transit like in the Netherlands

Stop subsidizing private rail companies without taking an ownership interest in the property



# Are there any additional trends that should be considered in the Plan?

Private railroad companies (such as Brightline) running passenger services

Passenger service utilizing Kennebec line to Augusta

Shared capital funding (IRAP)

Protect and expand rail opportunities.



# NEXT STEPS

- » Continue developing technical material (Winter 2022)
  - Rail system inventory, system use, economic profile, forecasting
- » Conduct stakeholder interviews (Early 2022 - Ongoing)
- » Conduct first round of public meetings (March 23, 2022)
- » Next RAC meeting (Spring 2022)
  - Review technical material
  - Needs discussion
- » Conduct second round of public meetings (Fall 2022)



# What does Maine do well to support *freight rail*?

Acquire lines at risk of abandonment.

Arbitration and support for mergers

Hosting intermodal and local service

Allowing trails to be converted back to rail if necessary

IRAP and grade crossing funding

Preserve rail lines that are otherwise at risk of being ripped up.

support NNERPA and the Downeaster passenger service

Protect and expand rail opportunities.

Provides safe inspection in coordination with FRA



# What does Maine do well to support *freight rail*?

Subsidize all riders in MA and NH to Maine riders have a chance to leave the state.

Be rail corridor agnostic and support freight rail use and growth statewide. Dont give preference to state owned facilities over private.



# What does Maine do well to support *passenger rail*?

downeaster is awesome, and keep expanding

simply funding it. the downeaster is among the finest state-

Higher frequency rail than most other parts of the country outside the Northeast Corridor

Support NNERPA and the Downeaster Rail Service

Affordable pricing

Think forward and out of the box Many countries have embraced rail travel for years

create light rail for smaller community interconnection, such as in the MidCoast to relieve car traffic congestion and increase connectivity for those without cars.

the downeaster is among the finest state-supported amtrak services, maine can and should be a leader for smaller states' rail ambitions

NEPRA and Train Riders does well in supporting the Downeaster service.



# What does Maine do well to support *passenger rail*?

Keeps the Downeaster moving! Is looking at other rail programs, seems to be slow developing tho.

Follow through with Rockland spur

Downeaster is great



# What could Maine do better to support *freight rail*?

Find ways to attract industry and other freight customers that can take advantage of the current infrastructure.

Help preserve the cost structure for shippers and consignees and some of the railroads are becoming predatory in seeking revenue.

Maintain the current state-owned rail in operatable conditions so when industry looks for shipping alternatives that one is available.



What could Maine do better to support  
*passenger rail*?





# THANK YOU QUESTIONS?

CHECK OUT THE STATE RAIL PLAN WEBSITE:  
[HTTPS://WWW.MAINE.GOV/MDOT/OFPS/RAIL-PLAN/](https://www.maine.gov/mdot/ofps/rail-plan/)

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