



## American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

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### **Sierra Northern Railway Named ASLRRRA's 2024 Environmental Award Winner**

**Kansas City, MO., March 25, 2024** – Sierra Northern Railroad was honored today for its contributions to environmental sustainability and air quality improvements in central California, an area served by the short line's intermodal port and transload facility. In 2024, Sierra Northern intends to be the first California short line to put a zero-emission hydrogen locomotive into full testing in revenue service, in a demonstration project funded by the California Energy Commission (CEC).

“The Sierra Northern Railroad's commitment to flexible and innovative client service led to CRISI-funded expansion of an inland port, and the construction of an intermodal transload facility, with a goal of reducing the environmental footprint of transportation in the breadbasket region of California,” said ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker. “Working with local area officials and key shipping partners, Sierra Northern has stepped in to fill the gap for customers by containerizing agricultural product, opening up markets in Asia and across America to the east. The net result is a trifecta – access to new markets for producers, significant improvement in congestion and air quality in rural areas and around ports, and efficient transportation for businesses that provide well-paying jobs. The hopeful addition of zero-emission hydrogen locomotives in 2024 and beyond, funded by the CEC and the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), will be a further environmental benefit for central California.”

The ASLRRRA Environmental Award recognizes a Class II or III railroad that has designed and

enacted the most innovative and successful environmental initiative in the small railroad industry, reducing the company's environmental impact or contributing to meeting sustainability goals for the railroad and/or their shipper(s).

Sierra Northern Railway's Inland Port and Transload facility is a groundbreaking development in freight movement in California's Central Valley, resulting in thousands of tons of agricultural commodities transiting through the central valley being removed from the roads and moved to end users and port facilities by rail. Sierra Northern recognized that customers lacked the ability to properly load and unload commodities for delivery to and from remote operations. Containerizing commodities at the transload facility has allowed producers to serve growing Asian markets through western ports and to capture growth in eastern markets served by rail.

And the environmental benefits of transferring freight from truck to rail are significant. Sierra Northern's intermodal operations, combined with more dependable rail services into ports, have taken a significant amount of truck traffic off the roads – not only in the rural communities around the transload facility, but in the port-adjacent communities as well, where rail service is easing gridlock and port entry delays and the attendant idling emissions from trucks.

Each railcar processed removes three to four trucks from the road, drastically reducing emissions and particulates from tires in the atmosphere and water. In 2023, the railroad processed 400 railcars per month, removing close to an estimated 20,000 truckloads per year.

In 2024 and beyond, if the demonstration projects being funded by CEC and CalSTA are successful, emissions will be further reduced by the integration of zero emission hydrogen fuel cell locomotives currently being built and readied for testing by Sierra Northern.

Finally, by expanding the economic base for the central valley, the inland port and transload facility will be a positive economic driver for years to come. The inland port and transload facility both offer well paying positions to local workers with ongoing training, education, and transferable skill development for the local workforce.

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**About ASLRRRA** - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation's 600 short line and regional railroads and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 47,500 miles of track in 49 states, or approximately 29% of the national railroad network, touching in origination or termination one out of every five cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network. [www.aslrra.org](http://www.aslrra.org)