



NEWS

Contact: Lena Kent
General Director, Public Affairs
Media@BNSF.com

Barstow International Gateway Approved by the Barstow City Council

First-of-its kind integrated rail facility will improve supply chain efficiency, create thousands of jobs, reduce highway congestion and support the movement of goods nationally and globally

FORT WORTH, TEXAS, June 17, 2026 – BNSF Railway today announced the Barstow City Council has approved the Barstow International Gateway (BIG) project, marking a major milestone for one of the most significant freight infrastructure investments in California history.

The Barstow International Gateway is a planned 4,500-acre, state-of-the-art integrated rail facility on the west side of Barstow, California. The project includes a rail yard, intermodal facility, and transload warehouses designed to shift freight from international containers to domestic containers more efficiently and sustainably.

Containers arriving at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach will move directly from ships to trains via the Alameda Corridor and onto the BNSF mainline to Barstow. At BIG, containers will be processed using zero emission cargo-handling equipment, then staged and built into trains headed east across BNSF's national network. Westbound freight will also be consolidated at the facility, improving efficiency for trains returning to the ports and other California terminals.

"BIG is a transformative, next generation rail facility that will deliver meaningful benefits for our customers," said BNSF President and CEO Katie Farmer. "By creating a more resilient, efficient, and low-carbon freight system, we're giving shippers faster, more reliable inland access and greater network fluidity. This \$4 billion private investment strengthens the entire supply chain, reduces congestion at the ports, and gives our customers a seamless product that also offers our customers greater optionality and flexibility."

"BIG is designed with our customers at the center," said BNSF EVP and Chief Marketing Officer Tom Williams. "By streamlining the handoff from the San Pedro Bay Ports to our national network, we're improving transit times, increasing capacity, and enhancing service reliability across long-haul corridors. This facility will help our customers compete in a global marketplace by ensuring their freight moves efficiently, sustainably, and with fewer bottlenecks from origin to destination."

"This is a landmark project that will shape the future of Barstow by creating thousands of jobs in the High Desert, propelling economic development, and supporting more efficient goods movement through the region," said San Bernardino County Supervisor Dawn Rowe. "San Bernardino County welcomes BNSF's investment in the community and is excited to see this long-anticipated project come to fruition."

A new model for goods movement in California

BIG represents a fundamental shift in how freight flows through the state. By relocating container sorting and processing from congested port-adjacent communities to Barstow—a high desert hub with strong transportation infrastructure—the project enables a major mode shift from trucking to cleaner, more efficient rail.

This shift is projected to eliminate approximately 205 million truck miles traveled (TMT) in 2028, 269 million TMT in 2033, and 312 million TMT in 2048, easing pressure on urban neighborhoods while delivering economic, environmental, and equity benefits statewide.

BNSF has committed to deploying zero-emission rail mounted gantry cranes, hybrid rubber-tired gantry cranes, zero emission forklifts and hostlers, and electric plug-ins for refrigerated units.

The company has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District to demonstrate zero emission technologies, including battery electric switcher locomotives, and an MOU with the California Air Resources Board to explore additional emissions reduction technologies and pursue grant opportunities. In addition, BNSF has voluntarily agreed to replace the existing switcher locomotives with the cleanest available Tier 4 switcher locomotives at its Barstow facility.

“BIG represents the kind of forward-looking investment that delivers real benefits for both the environment and the businesses that rely on a strong, efficient supply chain,” said Executive Director of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District Brad Poiriez. “By partnering with BNSF to demonstrate and advance zero emission technologies, we’re helping create a cleaner freight system that supports economic growth while protecting air quality for the communities of the Mojave Desert.”

Economic benefits for Barstow and the region

BIG is expected to generate significant economic benefits at the local, regional, and state levels, including approximately 62,000 construction-related jobs and 15,000 long-term operational jobs. These figures include direct, indirect, and induced employment in San Bernardino County and will help strengthen the global competitiveness of the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach by establishing the first integrated rail and transload complex within 130 miles of the ports.

Over its first 20 years of operation, BIG is projected to deliver substantial economic value within the City of Barstow, including:

- Approximately 5,400 new direct jobs
- \$938 million in total earnings
- \$2.9 billion in total economic output

The project also includes major infrastructure improvements that will benefit the broader community, including channel upgrades to reduce flooding, replacement of the Hinkley Road bridge over the Mojave River, and roadway circulation enhancements to improve traffic flow, safety, and emergency access.

“The Barstow International Gateway project epitomizes our commitment to a bright future for the city, and we’re proud to partner with BNSF Railway to bring thousands of jobs, billions in economic output and major infrastructure improvements to Barstow,” said Barstow Mayor Timothy R. Silva.

State Recognition and Strategic Importance

BIG was recently certified by Governor Gavin Newsom under California’s landmark SB 149 legislation, which accelerates critical infrastructure projects. It is the first transportation related project to receive this certification and one of only 10 local or regional transportation projects statewide to earn the designation.

The 2024 State Rail Plan highlighted BIG as the first facility of its kind developed by a Class I railroad, noting its ability to dramatically reduce truck trips and improve statewide goods movement efficiency by enabling direct loading of port containers onto trains for inland processing.

A partnership rooted in Barstow’s rail legacy

BNSF is proud to partner with the City of Barstow on this master planned rail facility that honors the city’s historic role as a rail hub. BIG represents a long-term investment in Barstow’s future, one that will generate revenue, create well-paid jobs, support economic development, and expand opportunities for improved services, schools, and quality of life.

At the same time, BIG will strengthen the nation’s freight infrastructure, enhance service for BNSF customers, and deliver lasting economic benefits across the region and the country.

About BNSF Railway

BNSF is North America’s leading freight transportation company. BNSF operates approximately 32,500 route miles of track in 28 states and also operates in three Canadian provinces. BNSF is one of the top transporters of consumer goods, grain and agricultural products, low-sulfur coal, and industrial goods such as petroleum, chemicals, housing materials, food and beverages. BNSF’s shipments help feed, clothe, supply, and power American homes and businesses every day. BNSF and its employees have developed one of the most technologically advanced and efficient railroads in the industry. We work continuously to improve the value of the safety, service, energy, and environmental benefits we provide to our customers and the communities we serve. You can learn more about BNSF at www.BNSF.com.