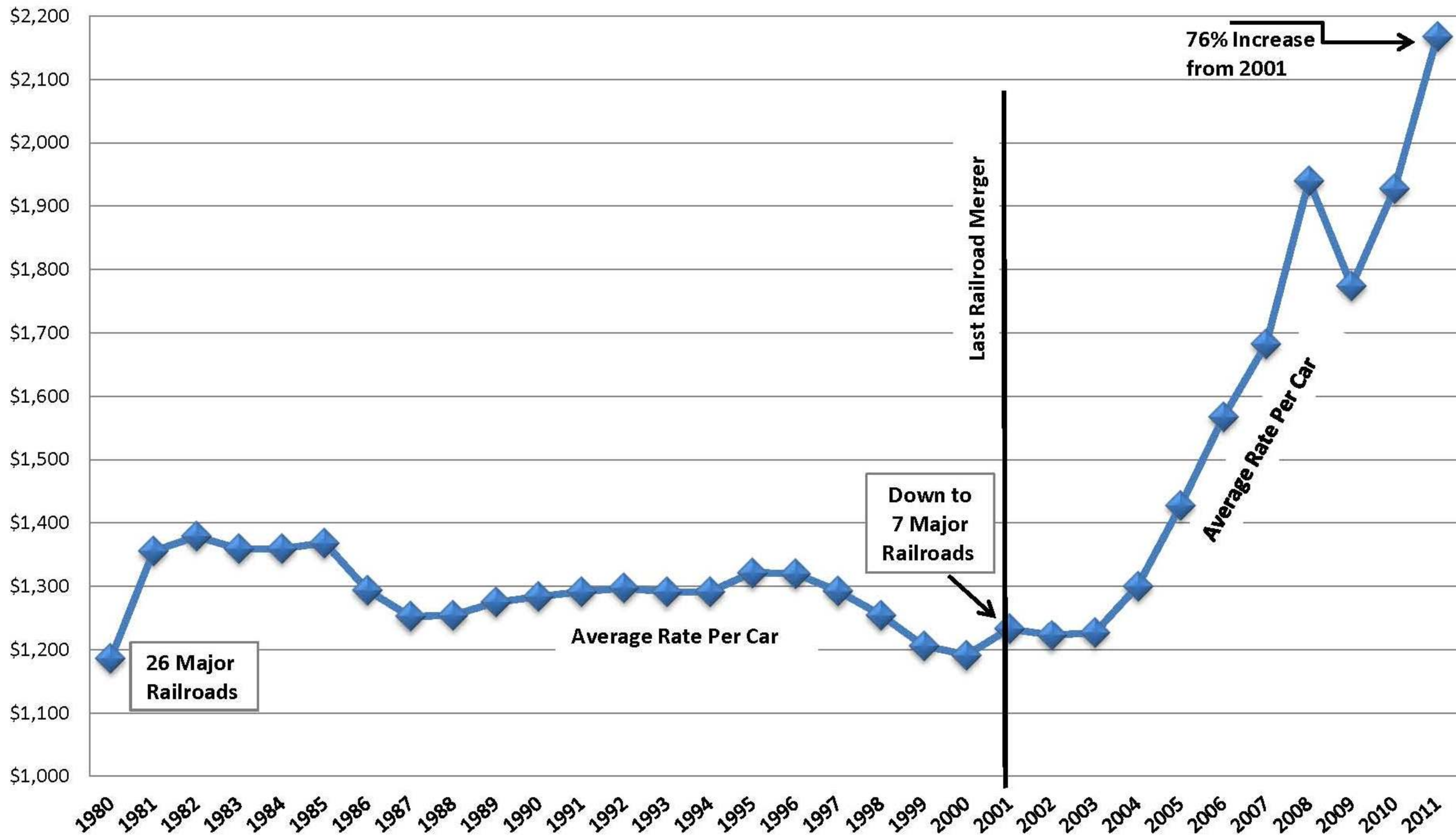


Rail Rates have Increased Dramatically Following Railroad Mergers



The number of large railroads in the US have reduced from 26 in 1980 to only 7 by 2001. The lack of rail competition resulting from rail mergers has caused the cost of shipping by rail to increase substantially since 2001 .