9router: A Free Local Proxy That Routes Around AI Rate Limits and Cuts Token Costs

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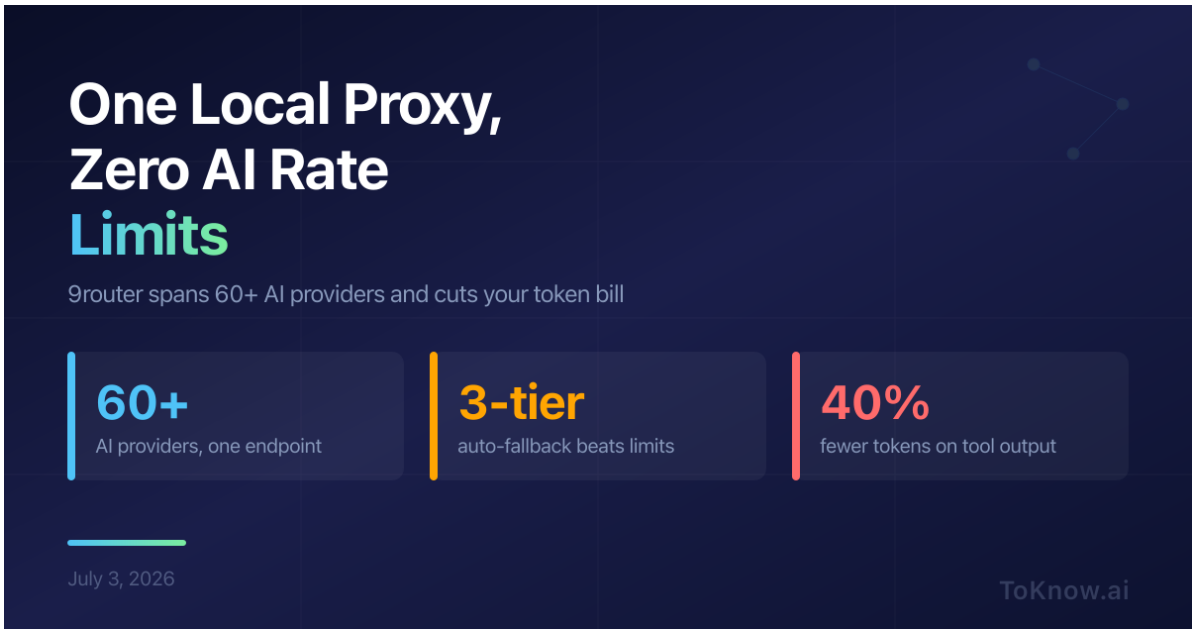

9router is a free, MIT-licensed proxy that runs on your own machine and keeps a coding session alive when a provider cuts you off. One npm command opens an endpoint at `localhost:20128` that speaks the standard OpenAI format, so Claude Code, Codex, Cursor, or Cline can talk to it unchanged. Behind it, requests fan out across the 60-plus providers it lists in a three-tier fallback: your paid subscription first, then cheap options like GLM and MiniMax, then free

tiers like Kiro and OpenCode. When a quota runs dry it switches instead of failing, so a run that would stall at 2am keeps going for free.

It also trims tokens on the way through. A built-in feature called RTK, ported from the Rust "Rust Token Killer" project, compresses tool output like `git diff` and `grep` before it reaches the model, which 9router says cuts 20 to 40% of a request's input tokens without changing the answer. A separate caveman mode shortens replies by up to 65%. For a solo developer who cannot absorb $20 to $50 a month per provider, that means fewer rate-limit walls and a smaller bill.

The convenience has two catches. Routing a paid subscription's quota through another tool sits in a terms-of-service gray zone, and 9router's optional bridge that intercepts GitHub Copilot, Antigravity, and Kiro traffic pushes that further; the project says to mind each tool's policy. A local proxy that holds your keys and sees every prompt is a trust decision, and although the repo is MIT-licensed, its core app ships as a private package you cannot fully audit.

Read More: where 9router fits among six token-cutting tools.

Sources:

- 9router
- 9router source and README (decolua/9router)
- RTK, the Rust Token Killer that 9router ports for compression
- CLIProxyAPI, the Go router that inspired the JavaScript port

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