

Air Travelers Avoided 41 Million Trips in Past Year - U.S. Economy Takes \$26.5 Billion Hit

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First-of-Its-Kind Study Demonstrates Travelers Changing Behavior Due to Immense Frustration with Air Travel Process

The Travel Industry Association (TIA) today released a landmark survey revealing that deep frustration among air travelers caused them to avoid an estimated 41 million trips over the past 12 months at a cost of more than \$26 billion to the U.S. economy. Conducted by the premier, bipartisan polling firms of Peter D. Hart Research Associates and The Winston Group, the research also demonstrated that air travelers express little optimism for positive change, with nearly 50 percent saying that the air travel system is not likely to improve in the near future.

"The air travel crisis has hit a tipping point - more than 100,000 travelers each day are voting with their wallets by choosing to avoid trips," said Roger Dow, President and CEO of TIA. "This landmark research should be a wake up call to America's policy leaders that the time for meaningful air system reform is now."

Dow noted that the 41 million avoided trips during the last 12 months rippled outward across the entire travel community costing airlines more than \$9 billion in revenue, hotels nearly \$6 billion and restaurants more than \$3 billion. In addition, federal, state and local governments lost more than \$4 billion in tax revenue because of reduced spending by travelers.

"Many travelers believe their time is not respected and it is leading them to avoid a significant number of trips," said Allan Rivlin, a partner at Peter D. Hart Research Associates. "Inefficient security screening and flight cancellations and delays are air travelers' top frustrations."

"A majority of travelers thought that air travel safety was getting better and a majority thought the security was improving as well," said David Winston, President of the Winston Group. "But there are clear frustrations around efficiency and reliability, which are contributing to travelers avoiding air travel."

The survey found that travelers believe that the air travel system is bad and getting worse, for example:

More than 60 percent believe the air travel system is deteriorating,

One-third of all air travelers are dissatisfied with the air travel system, with 48 percent all frequent air travelers (5+ trips per year) dissatisfied, and

Travelers are most irritated about the air travel process, not the airlines. Issues the federal government can address are travelers' top concerns: delays, cancellations and inefficient security screening.

"With rising fuel prices already weighing heavily on American pocketbooks, we need to find ways to encourage Americans to continue their business and leisure travel. Unfortunately, just the opposite appears to be happening," said Dow.

Following this landmark survey, TIA will host an emergency summit of travel leaders on June 17 in Washington, DC to discuss next steps for moving this issue forward with policymakers. In addition, TIA has called on each of the major presidential candidates to commit to addressing this issue for the millions of American air travelers - and voters - who face the trials of the antiquated air traffic system on a daily basis and to issue a comprehensive plan to fix major elements of the air travel system during their first term in office.

The survey of 1,003 air travelers (adults who had taken at least one roundtrip by air in the last 12 months) was conducted between May 6 and May 13, 2008 and the statistical margin of sampling error is +/- 3.2 percentage points.

The Travel Industry Association is the national, non-profit organization representing all components of the \$740 billion travel industry. TIA's mission is to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States.

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