

Airports Council International-North America Position Statement on Climate Change

Executive Summary

Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA) and its member airports recognize the importance of addressing aviation's greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Aircraft are the largest source of aviation-related greenhouse gas emissions. While airport owned and controlled sources contribute far less emissions, airports are proactively working to reduce those emissions and identifying opportunities to work with their industry partners to help reduce emission from other aviation-related sources such as aircraft and passenger vehicles.

ACI-NA believes further action is needed to address aircraft emissions. All facets of the aviation industry must work together to achieve emission reductions through a comprehensive approach that includes operational advances, technology improvements, infrastructure investments, alternative fuels, and economic measures. While a global system is the preferred approach, in its absence, ACI-NA members support domestic policy action to address aircraft greenhouse gas emissions.

I. Aviation's Role in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Aviation consists of many activities, primarily aircraft operations and activities that support those operations. Like many other human activities, such as driving and generating electricity, aviation emissions contribute to climate change. Aviation is estimated to globally contribute approximately 3-5% of human-induced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Aviation-related sources of GHG emissions include:

- facility electrical use and generation
- stationary sources (boilers, heaters, etc.)
- airport service vehicles/fleet vehicles
- aircraft and auxiliary power units
- ground support equipment (baggage tugs, fueling trucks, etc.)
- vehicles accessing the airport (passengers, employees, taxis, hotel/parking shuttles, etc.)
- construction
- waste management

Airport operators have direct responsibility for reducing emissions associated with the sources they own and control: facility electrical use, fleet vehicle use, and a portion of waste management. Recent inventories at a number of airports show that most airport operators own or control sources that contribute about 2-5% of total airport-related GHG emissions. Airlines and other airport tenants own and control about 90% of the emission sources, with aircraft emissions representing the single greatest emissions source. Vehicles traveling to and from an airport represent the remaining emissions.

Reducing aviation's impact on climate change requires a commitment from all facets of the industry: airport operators, airlines, aircraft and engine manufacturers, air traffic control, communities, airport tenants, and passengers. Airports are playing a proactive role in reducing emissions as outlined below.

II. **Airport Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Airports are committed to minimizing and reducing GHG emissions from sources they own and control. Examples of initiatives designed to reduce emissions from sources owned by the airport operator include:

- investing in low emission airport vehicles
- utilizing energy efficient equipment and technology and implementing conservation programs in buildings
- purchasing and generating renewable energy
- recycling waste, water, and construction materials

Many airports' efforts to reduce GHG emissions include developing an inventory of all GHG emissions associated with the airport operations, even those emission sources not under ownership or control of the airport. Such inventories can help identify opportunities for emission reductions.

In addition to the sources airport operators own and control, airports recognize that they can influence the emissions of the sources owned and controlled by airlines, other business partners, and passengers. As a result, many airports have implemented actions such as:

- supporting public transportation access to reduce passenger vehicle miles
- increasing efficiency of the curbside to reduce vehicle trip lengths and idling
- installing ground power and preconditioned air systems at gates to reduce the use of the auxiliary power units on aircraft
- installing ground power and alternative fueling sources at airports to enable airlines to convert ground support equipment to cleaner, lower emission vehicles
- adding runways, taxiways and high speed exits to increase efficiency of airside infrastructure and reduce aircraft taxiing and idling distances and time.

In furtherance of the airport industry's proactive record of reducing environmental impacts, in February 2009, the ACI-NA Board of Directors adopted a slate of airport industry environmental goals. Many of these goals are specifically aimed at reducing airport-related GHG emissions, both those within airports control and, in recognition of the role airports play in aiding GHG emission reductions from other sources, those outside airport ownership and control. In addition, last year a number of U.S. and Canadian airports signed on to a global aviation industry commitment to address climate change.

III. **ACI-NA Position on Climate Change**

ACI-NA members are taking aggressive action to reduce emissions associated with sources under their control. In addition, ACI-NA and its members believe that it is necessary to reduce GHG emissions from aircraft sources. Aircraft GHG emissions are best reduced through a multi-faceted approach that includes operational advances, technology improvements, infrastructure investments, alternative fuels, and economic measures.

A. **Operational Advances and Emission Reduction Measures**

ACI-NA supports the following actions to reduce aviation-related GHG emissions system-wide:

- Modernized Air Traffic Control System: ACI-NA recognizes that one of the most effective measures to reducing aviation's greenhouse gas emissions is through modernization of our air traffic control system. We urge the expeditious revitalization of this critical infrastructure.
- Operational Measures: Fuel and emissions savings procedures have been developed that allow pilots to descent from cruise altitude more efficiently through continuous descent approaches (CDAs) and to navigate more precisely through required navigation procedures (RNP). ACI-NA members support the implementation of such operational measures to the extent a careful consideration is given to the possible implications to other environmental parameters such as noise or local air quality.
- Improved Engine and Airframe Technology: Significant improvements in aircraft fuel efficiency have been gained through advances in engine and airframe design. ACI-NA members support the continued research and development by industry and government to foster the technology needed for additional GHG emission reductions.
- Alternative Fuels: ACI-NA is part of the industry commitment to push for the research, development, and deployment of commercially viable, sustainable alternative jet fuels. Through the Commercial Aviation Alternative Fuels Initiative (CAAFI), ACI-NA is working with FAA, the Department of Defense, airlines, manufacturers, academia, and fuel producers to generate and execute roadmaps to develop, certify, and commercially implement alternative jet fuels within the next few years. CAAFI is committed to ensuring these fuels are more sustainable on a life-cycle basis than today's jet fuels and that feedstock used will not compete with food uses.
- Infrastructure Investments: At many of our busiest airports, ground congestion is caused by constraints created due to inadequate airport infrastructure. Additional airport infrastructure is needed to ensure aircraft spend less time circling in congested airspace, get on the ground more quickly, and to improve ground movement efficiency. In addition to infrastructure improvements that reduce congestion, many airports are instituting a broad array of measures to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with airport operations and facilities. Recognition of and broad support for continued implementation of such measures are necessary.

B. Economic Measures

ACI-NA encourages the U.S. and Canada, working with governments throughout the world, to incorporate the true environmental and economic costs of GHG emissions into the price of energy through the development of appropriate economic measures.

Given the global nature of aviation, the integration of aircraft GHG emissions into a global system is the preferred approach to address aviation's GHG emission contribution. Noting the difficulties involved with establishing a global system, ACI-NA encourages the U.S. and Canada to take immediate policy action to address aviation's GHG emissions. While a diverse array of economic measures has been discussed, ranging from cap-and-trade to taxation, the ultimate domestic mechanism should be incorporated into a global system as soon as possible thereafter.

Such measures should result in a continued reduction in aviation energy intensity, with the goal of reducing total aviation-related emissions in the long-term while also minimizing the potential exacerbation of other airport environmental impacts, such as noise and criteria pollutant emissions.

Should any economic measure raise revenues from the aviation industry, those revenues should be invested in a manner that will have the greatest impact on long-term GHG emission reductions within the aviation industry.

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