

STUDY OF CONGESTION COSTS FOR AIR TRAVEL RESULTING FROM ELIMINATION OF AMTRAK SERVICE ON THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR



CLIENT

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Econsult Corporation was retained by Amtrak to study the economic impacts resulting from the elimination of the rail carrier's Northeast Corridor (NEC) Service.

Various transportation and economic models were employed by Econsult to measure the increased costs that would be incurred by air travelers, as airports in the Northeast, many of which already operate at or near capacity, would strain to absorb the additional passengers that chose to fly in the absence of rail service.

Econsult first estimated the increase in the number of flights at various airports that would be needed to service the 13% of NEC passengers shifting to air travel. The airport level congestion costs associated with the increased flight volume were measured using the FAA's *Airport Capacity and Delay Model*, which explicitly accounts for the specific capacity characteristics of each of the individual airports. Congestion-related delay costs were shown to be heaviest, by far, at Newark International Airport, reflecting both the large number of expected flights that would use the airport, as well as the current existing capacity constraints. The delay costs at Philadelphia and Boston were also shown to be relatively high.

The congestion costs included the estimated increase in annual aircraft delays, which were converted to estimates of the value of passenger delays. Econsult estimated that the value of these passenger delays would result in over \$107 million in annual travel time cost increases.