

Hanscom High Flyers: Private Jet Excess Doesn't Justify Airport Expansion

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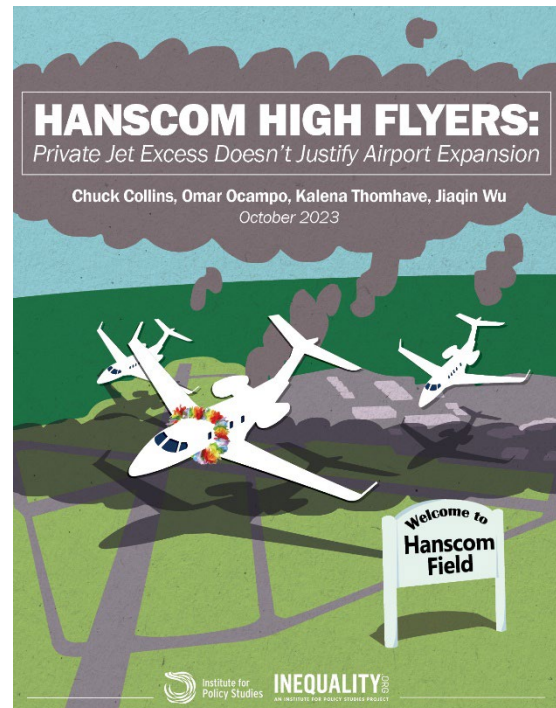
Report Summary

A proposal to expand Laurence G. Hanscom Field airport in order to accommodate a 300 percent increase in private jet services is currently under consideration by the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport).

Based on a comprehensive analysis of private flights traveling to and from Hanscom Field over an 18-month period, **we find that the expansion would primarily serve the wealthiest travelers in the region, many who frequently take short-hop flights to recreational and luxury destinations.**

- Between January 2022 and July 2023, we identified 31,599 private flights taken by 2,915 jets. Private jets departed Hanscom Field for 761 unique destinations. Over the 18 months studied, private Hanscom Field flights were responsible for **an estimated 106,676 tons of carbon emissions.**
- We estimate that **at least half of these flights (49 percent) were for recreational and luxury travel.** This statistic includes the more than 36 percent of flights (5,632 flights) that traveled to 212 airports near luxury or vacation destinations.
- Roughly 16 percent of private jet flights from Hanscom Field were to destinations in New England. Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, Portland, Portsmouth, Hyannis, and Rockland were among the top 10 flight destinations in New England. **All of these destinations are either a short drive or a short drive and ferry ride from Hanscom Field.**
- Approximately **41 percent of flights departing Hanscom Field had durations of less than one hour, with 14 percent lasting less than 30 minutes.** Because take-off is the most fuel intensive part of a flight, short-hop flights are extremely energy inefficient compared to other transportation alternatives.
- The private jet flyers on the 20 most active jets at Hanscom Field took 3,240 flights, a number that includes both arrivals and departures. **These 20 aircraft accounted for more than 10 percent of all Hanscom Field private jet flights during the 18 months we studied and 14 percent of total carbon emissions,** releasing an estimated 14,930 tons of carbon emissions. The average Massachusetts resident is responsible for 8 tons per year.

Some of the most frequent flyers, however, may not be in our data set. Private jet owners may request that the FAA exclude their jets from public tracking registries, leading to gaps in the data. Four Boston area billionaires –Robert Kraft, Jim Davis, John Henry, and Paul Fireman – have had their jets removed from the public registry.



Hanscom Field's "High Flyers" — the top 20 private jet travelers using Hanscom Field — are profiled in full in the report. The top 20 include:

John Fish/Suffolk Aviation LLC. CEO of Suffolk Construction. Net worth \$1.2 billion. #3 Hanscom Frequent Flyer. #1 Carbon emitter: 2,329 tons over 18 months. 44 round trip flights to West Palm Beach and flights to Aruba; Aspen, Colorado; and Barcelona, Spain.

John W. Childs. Venture capitalist: #5 most frequent flyer. #3 largest carbon emitter: 1,407 tons over 18 months. Frequent trips to Vero Beach, Florida, where Childs and Rosario, Argentina, to a bird hunting lodge. Also Palermo, Italy; the US Virgin Islands; Palm Springs, CA; and the Hamptons.

Arthur S. Demoulas. Net worth: \$1.3 billion. In 2014, tried to oust cousin Arthur T. Demoulas, from the leadership of Market Basket. # 10 Hanscom frequent flyer with flights to Aspen, Key West, and London. Total carbon emissions were 741 tons.

Charlesbank Partners. Own 3 jets in top 20 frequent users, including #1, #8 and #12. 3 jets took 676 flights, emitting 2,701 tons of carbon. #1 frequent took a whopping 387 flights over the 18-month period, including 112 flights to and from Nantucket and 159 flights to and from Teterboro Airport outside New York City. Charlesbank is also a major investor in fossil fuel projects.

Recommendations

Policymakers and the general public deserve to know more about the wealthy's use of private jets. We call for greater transparency around private jet flights and their carbon emissions. Our recommendations also include:

- **Suspend any private jet service expansions**, planned or otherwise, at Hanscom Field and Boston Logan International airports.
- **Eliminate the Massachusetts sales tax exemption** on aviation purchases and fuel.
- **Increase the excise tax on jet fuel**, using the revenue to invest in green transit.

See full report at ips-dc.org/report-hanscom-high-flyers

Quick graphic facts:

