HIGH FLYERS 2026

The High Cost of Private Jet Excess

How Taxpayers and Commercial Passengers Subsidize Luxury Private Jet Travel

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OTHER RELEVANT RESEARCH

Since 2007, the IPS Program on Inequality and the Common Good has been analyzing the harms caused by private jets on our society and environment. Recent reports include:

- *Sustainable Alternatives to Jet Fuels: Promising Solution or Industry Hype? May 2024.*
- *Hanscom High Flyers: Private Jet Excess Doesn't Justify Airport Expansion. October 2023.*
- *High Flyers 2023: How Ultra-Rich Private Jet Travel Costs the Rest of Us and Burns Up the Planet. May 2023.*

The **Institute for Policy Studies** (IPS-DC.org), a multi-issue research center. The IPS Program on Inequality and the Common Good conducts original research and our website (Inequality.org) provides an online portal into all things related to the income and wealth gaps that so divide us, in the United States and throughout the world.
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REPORT SUMMARY

From an ecological perspective, luxury private jets are the most energy intensive, ecologically destructive, and anti-social form of transportation. And thanks to a powerful private jet lobby—advocating on behalf of the wealthiest and most powerful people on the planet—the rest of us subsidize the high-flying lifestyle of this tiny slice of humanity, the wealthiest 0.003 percent.

We All Pay for the Harms of Private Jet Excess

- **U.S. taxpayers and commercial air travelers subsidize the luxury private jet transportation sector.** Private jets fail to pay their fair share of their use of airspace and the costs of their carbon pollution, shifting the burden to everyone else.
    - Private jets and charter services account for roughly 16 percent of FAA-handled flight operations, with the U.S. Department of Transportation estimating noncommercial private jets account for 7 percent of the airspace activity yet contribute less than 0.6 percent of the taxes flowing into the Airport and Airway Trust Fund that helps finance FAA operations.

- An estimated 256,000 people—or roughly 0.003 percent of the population—fly on private jets, including a slice of the ultrawealthy using fractional ownership or private charter jets.

- The National Business Aviation Association spent approximately $2 million in lobbying efforts in 2025 to ensure opacity in the aviation sector. We are all paying for massive tax breaks that the private jet lobby works to insert into legislation that serves private jet owners like the permanent accelerated depreciation tax of 2025.

As Wealth Inequality Grows, So Does Private Jet Consumption

- As the number of ultra-high net worth individuals and billionaires has grown—there are 3,428 global billionaires as of this year—private jet ownership and use have also accelerated.
    - The median wealth of a private jet owner is $190 million, while the median wealth of a fractional owner of a private jet is $140 million.

- The U.S. is the primary driver of the luxury private jet expansion. It is home to 4 percent of the world's population and nearly 69 percent of the world's registered jets. Private jet operations and greenhouse gas emissions in two U.S. states alone, Florida and Texas, are greater than the 27 member countries of the European Union combined.

- Since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the private jet market has proven to be resilient and continues to grow. Private jet operations and sales have surged.
    - Demand for private jets is accompanied by increased demand for private jet infrastructure, including hangar space and airports that can accommodate private, luxury aviation. Like local contests over AI data center construction, communities are rising up to oppose private jet airport expansions because of local impacts and climate disruption.
    - More than a third of all Airport Infrastructure Grants awarded through 2026 went to airport projects that may primarily benefit private jets, amounting to more than $1.13 billion in grant funds.
    - Between 2019 and 2025, **fractional jet ownership increased 65 percent**.

Private jets are the super-polluters. On a warming planet, private jet operations are indefensible.

- Private jets account for a small sliver of aviation activity, but they are the most polluting form of transport and represent the fastest growing segment of aviation emissions.
    - A private jet passenger is often responsible for 10 to 14 times or more the emissions of a commercial airline passenger and roughly 50 times those of a passenger traveling the same route by rail with the disparity exceeding 200 times on rail systems powered by low-carbon electricity.
    - IPS's new **Private Jet Emission Tracker** now has the capacity to measure emissions on specific flights and events, calibrated to jet size and fuel consumption.
    - Private jets typically travel at higher altitudes than standard commercial airliners, contributing to aviation's **effective radiative forcing, which reflects climate effects that can be two to four times greater than those from CO_2 emissions alone.**

- Contrary to the branding of "business" aviation, luxury private jets are mostly deployed for or combined with leisure, recreational, and luxury travel. Indeed, a growing number of wealthy children are traveling to summer camp in private jets.
    - At least 50 percent of private jet operations are for recreational, vacation, and personal luxury travel.

- Events like Davos, the Super Bowl, and the Kentucky Derby are "carbon bombs" that attract ultrawealthy travelers who swarm to these global gatherings to see and be seen. These events include the Cannes Film Festival, U.S. Masters Golf Tournament, and Monaco Yacht Show.
    - The 2026 FIFA World Cup saw more than 92,000 private jet flights, emitting 150 kilotons of excess emissions—the equivalent of 34,000 gas-guzzling cars driving for a year.

- **Short-haul flights** make up a large percentage of luxury private jet travel. These flights could easily be substituted with alternative transportation options that generate significantly less pollution like electric vehicle ground transport, high-speed rail and more energy efficient ground transportation.

The degradation of the commercial aviation experience ("enshittification") is in part caused by the proliferation of luxury private jets.

- Private jets are **worsening the air travel experience for commercial passengers**, adding to airspace congestion, delays, pilot shortages that contribute to cancellations and rising costs, and stress on the air traffic system. In some airspace corridors, such as around New Jersey's Teterboro Airport, private jets contribute to crowding and delays, especially during storm conditions. The system suffers from the wealthiest travelers "opting out" of the commercial aviation system rather than using their considerable clout to improve commercial aviation and public transportation for all.

The promotion of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs) as a viable solution for decarbonizing aviation is largely a green smokescreen that ignores **the limits of alternative aviation fuels and the fact the sector is incredibly difficult to green**.

- Substituting so-called “sustainable aviation fuels” (SAFs) is a greenscreen distraction. While there may be some potential for electrification of small-scale, short-haul aviation, there is no scalable or cost-effective alternative to kerosene-based jet fuels developing at the speed of climate change.
- A vibrant and dynamic SAF market has yet to materialize. As a result, SAF production targets are continually missed.
- Price parity between SAFs and conventional jet fuel is unlikely due to the deoxygenation process required with renewable feedstocks, which adds a price premium.
- The necessary agricultural land use changes could threaten global food security—at a time when food prices are rising—as well as nature-based carbon sequestration solutions. Its widescale adoption may not reduce the life cycle of greenhouse emissions and may actively undermine our purported climate goals.

Solutions. Global ecosystems will be severely disrupted by the reckless consumption of this wealthy 0.003 percent of the population. Some solutions will require voluntary actions to give up private jets or limit their use. But real behavioral change will require increased taxes and regulations to change and decarbonize private jet users’ indefensible behavior.

- **Immediate Action: Stop Another Pending Private Jet Tax Break**. Lawmakers must immediately strip the ALERT Act, legislation to improve air traffic safety standards, of provisions to prohibit jurisdictions from using ADB-S tracking to levy use fees and taxes. This cynical move, which attaches a private jet tax avoidance measure to legislation responding to the January 2025 collision over the Potomac, should be publicized as overreach by the private jet lobby.

- **Repeal One-Year Accelerated Bonus Depreciation of Private Jet Purchases**. Pass the End Subsidies for Private Jets Act, introduced by Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-VA), and other members of Congress.

- **Increase Tax on Private Jet Fue**l. Lawmakers should levy taxes on private jets and eliminate tax subsidies so that jet users pay their fair share. One legislative proposal is to increase taxes on private jet fuel nine-fold to cover real costs and invest in sustainable transportation.

- **Luxury Tax on Private Jet Sales**. A luxury transfer tax on pre-owned and new jets could raise billions of dollars in revenue that could be used to build green infrastructure and decarbonize our economy. A luxury tax of 10 percent on used jets and 5 percent on new jets could have raised more than $3 billion in 2025, funds that could be invested in a sustainable transportation system for everyone, not just the billionaires and ultrawealthy.

- **Rollback secrecy provisions** and protect the public right to know who is burning up our future.

- **Stop funding and constructing new private jet infrastructure**, just as some institutions have committed to no new fossil fuel infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

On September 2, 2026, the United Nations released a new report warning that, because of human activity, the earth will soon cross the 1.5°C/2.7°F safe temperature threshold of global warming. As a result, the planet will face decades of increased weather-related disasters, rising seas, extinction events, and the melting ice and glaciers.[1]

The U.N. authors argue we are moving to a "coping and containment" phase, in which people and policymakers must make plans for a world that has crossed the 1.5 C threshold while working diligently to reduce carbon and methane emissions. "Every fraction of a degree avoided… will save lives, protect ecosystems and reduce economic losses," writes UNEP Executive Director Inger Anderson. "I call on governments—and on everyone with the power to effect change—to act with urgency and determination."[2]

We need a dramatic course correction in every sector, including aviation. But the private jet class appears to be chugging along with record production, sales, and infrastructure expansion to serve private jets, one of the most polluting forms of transportation on earth.

As wealth has concentrated in fewer hands over the last few decades, private jets have become a cultural marker of luxury for the global billionaire class.

From an ecological perspective, private jets are the most energy intensive, eco-destructive, and anti-social form of transportation. And thanks to a powerful private jet lobby—advocating on behalf of the wealthiest and most powerful people on the planet—the rest of us subsidize the high-flying lifestyle of this tiny slice of humanity, the wealthiest 0.003.

Once airborne, private jets typically travel at higher altitudes than standard commercial airliners. One analysis found that private aircraft spend 45.4 percent of total flight time above 30,000 feet and 21.4 percent of the time flying above 40,000 feet, suggesting that a share of emissions enters sensitive layers of the atmosphere.[3] But the harms go beyond excess emissions.

Since 2007, the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies has tracked the rise of private jet consumption and the implications its usage has for society, the traveling public, and the ecology of the planet. This report—the ***2026 High Flyers*** report—aims to update statistics on private jet trends and societal impacts. It includes an updated set of recommendations to ensure private jet users pay the real cost of their use of this luxury, both in terms of use of airspace and infrastructure, but also private jets' climate impact.

PART I: WEALTH INEQUALITY & THE PRIVATE JET SURGE

As the number of ultra-high net worth individuals and households has grown, so too has the demand for private jets. Private jet excess is one of the many consequences of a society growing steadily more unequal.

In 2026, *Forbes* identified 3,428 billionaires globally, an increase of 400 compared to the year before. The combined wealth of this group is a staggering $20.1 trillion.[4] The United States topped the annual list with 989 billionaires. It is also home to 15 of the top 20 wealthiest people in the world, with each owning net assets worth $100 billion or more.

Most of these billionaires own or travel in luxury private jets (LPJs) with some owning multiple jets. The private jet class is a tiny slice of humanity. By one estimate, they include roughly 256,000 people, or 0.003 percent of the global population. This group's combined net worth is $31 trillion, with average wealth of $123 million.[5]

Other estimates affirm that the median wealth of a private jet owner is $190 million with fractional jet owners holding an estimated median wealth of $140 million. There is also a correlation between the size of the jet and median wealth. The median wealth for large private jet owners is an estimated $270 million.[6]

For this small class of ultra-high net worth individuals, the ultimate way to flaunt their social status and publicly display their wealth is through their participation in private jet activities. The ability to charter, splurge on a **JetCard,** or purchase a new

or used private jet is now a cultural benchmark that differentiates the top 0.1 percent from others who sit comfortably at the top of the wealth distribution.[7]

The billion-dollar windfalls from recent initial public offerings of SpaceX and other AI start-ups have minted a new class of multi-millionaires and billionaires fueling demand for private jet options. There is now an uptick in entry-level private jet travel from tech's *nouveau riche*, further diversifying the demographics of the world's high flyers with young AI tech entrepreneurs.[8] The ability to fly private, the peak of conspicuous luxury consumption, is now a rite of passage to join the ranks of the ultra-wealthy.

The U.S. Drives the Private Jet Market

The United States is at the center of the private jet surge primarily because most of the ultra-wealthy reside in the U.S. Though home to just 4 percent of the global population, the U.S. accounts for 68.7 percent—more than two-thirds—of the world's registered private jets.[9]

Most private jet operations (65 percent) take place in U.S. airports. As a result, they contribute 55 percent of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced by private jets. There were more private jet flights and GHG emitted in Florida and Texas alone than the 27 member states that make up the European Union combined.[10]

Indeed, 18 of the 20 most polluting private jet airports—measured by emissions and fuel use—are also in the United States, according to 2023 data.[11] Van Nuys Airport, which serves the Greater Los Angeles area, is in a majority Hispanic working-class neighborhood and is the world's third most polluting airport. Van Nuys also houses the private jets of billionaire celebrities like Kim Kardashian, Jay-Z, and Elon Musk.

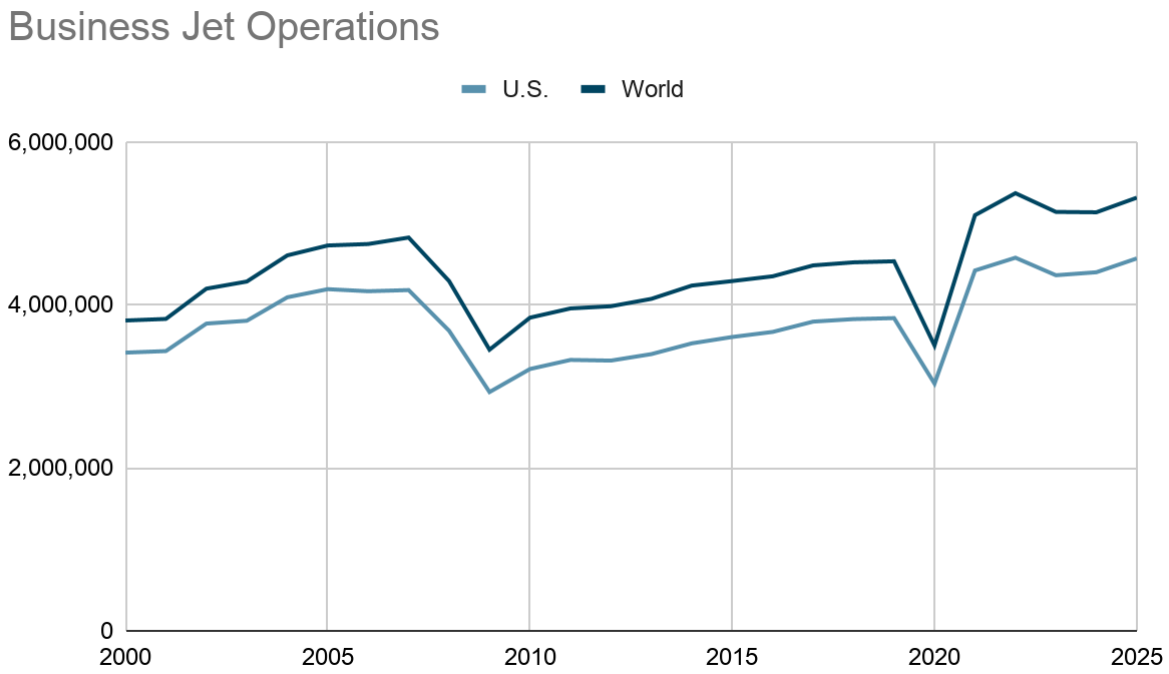
The Demand for Private Jets

The two years following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic (2021 and 2022) were exceptional for the private jet industry. During this time, flight operations reached record levels, sales by dollar volume surged, and the backlog of new private jet orders grew. The increased demand from ultra-high net worth

individuals was fueled by their desire to avoid crowded airports, partly to minimize their exposure to the coronavirus but also to enjoy the luxuries of stress-free and flexible private air travel.[12]

Business forecasts at the time expected a slight dip in the market after 2022 but they did not anticipate a significant contraction. According to these assessments, the fundamentals of the industry rested on solid foundations, and they predicted a period of steady growth over the next five years.[13] These forecasts have been proven to be correct. The record levels of private jet activity and expansion that took place in 2021 and 2022 were not outliers.

Total private jet operations since 2023 have remained higher than any period before the pandemic *and* the transient peak year of 2021. Meanwhile 2025 produced the second highest number of private jet operations this century at 5.3 million, falling a mere 55 thousand flights short of surpassing the apex reached in 2022.[14]



Source: Federal Aviation Administration. Business jet operations for the world include the U.S.

At the time of writing, total private jet operations are up 2.7 percent year-over-year in 2026.[15] And according to the FAA, there was a 5.2 percent and a 6.7 percent

year-over-year increase in private jet operations in the months of June and July 2026, respectively.

One of the reasons why private jet operations have increased and remain above historic levels is the proliferation of more affordable options for the affluent.[16] Ultra-high net worth individuals can forgo the full financial commitment that comes with owning a private jet. Instead, they can enroll in membership programs where they can charter a flight with a private operator, or they can order one using an on-demand application that they can access through their smartphones.

The three most popular airports for domestic private jet operations in 2026, thus far, are Teterboro Airport in New Jersey (serving the New York City area), Dallas Love Field in Texas, and Dulles International Airport in Virginia (serving Washington, D.C.). Dulles International overtook Palm Beach International Airport in Florida, which we identified as the second most popular private jet destination in our ***High Flyers 2023*** report. Palm Beach International has since been renamed the President Donald J. Trump International Airport.[17]

The resiliency of the private jet market is clearly demonstrated by the industry's ability to weather the uncertainties that have afflicted the global economy over the past several years. The Covid-19 pandemic, President Trump's tariff regime, and geopolitical wars and conflicts have all contributed to inflation, higher oil prices, and supply chain disruptions.[18] And yet the size of the global luxury jet market has grown 23.7 percent over the past five years, with an impressive annual growth rate of 4.7 percent. The industry even outperformed last year's projected forecast by $1.6 billion, reaching a total of $40.3 billion in 2025.[19]

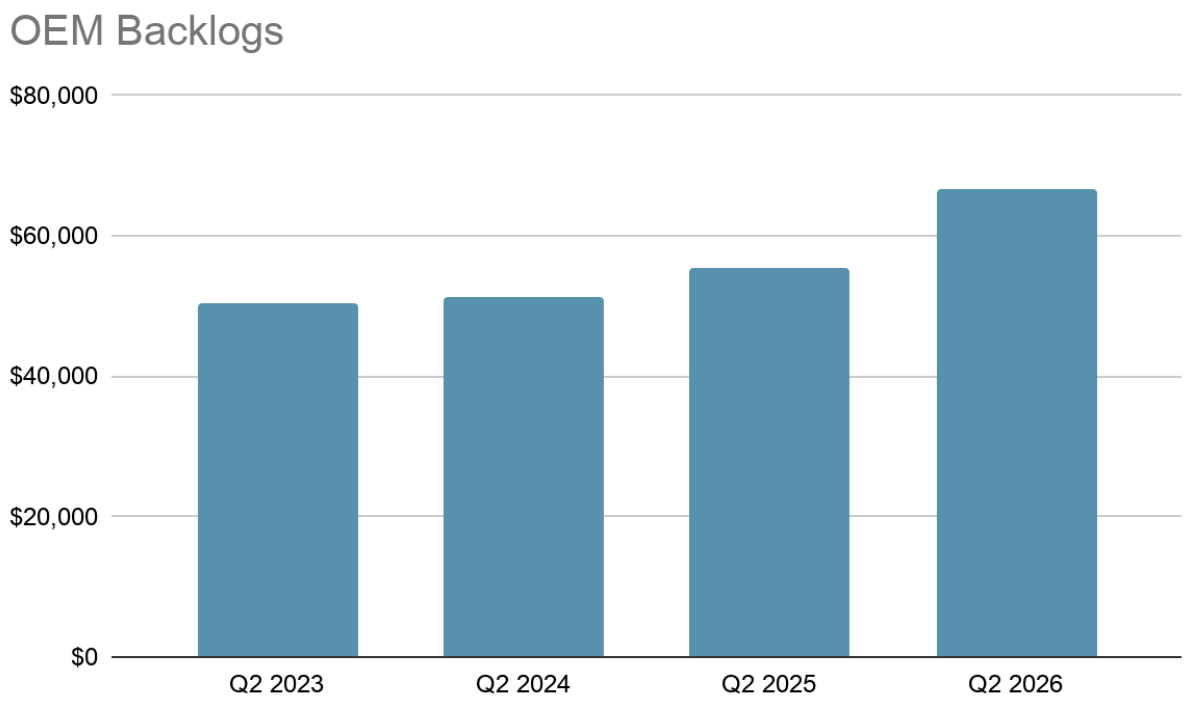
Global Private Jet Sales, 2021-2026

All sales and revenue amounts are shown in the millions of dollars

Year	Pre-owned jet sales	Potential revenue with a 10% tax on pre-owned jets	New jet sales	Potential revenue with a 5% tax on new jets	Total jet sales	Total potential revenue generated by jet sales taxes
2021	$16,900	$1,690	$15,600	$780	$32,500	$2,470
2022	$20,500	$2,050	$16,100	$805	$36,600	$2,855
2023	$16,700	$1,670	$16,400	$820	$33,100	$2,490
2024	$17,700	$1,770	$19,000	$950	$36,700	$2,720
2025	$20,100	$2,010	$20,200	$1,010	$40,300	$3,020
2026 (Forecast)	$21,400	$2,140	$24,200	$1,210	$39,500	$3,350

Source: IPS analysis of data from Global Jet Capital. Some of the figures may change as a result of delays in reporting.

The five largest business jet manufacturers—Bombardier (Canada), Cessna (U.S.), Dassault (France), Embraer (Brazil), and Gulfstream (U.S.)—published their Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) backlogs for the second quarter of 2026. The data demonstrates an $11.3 billion, or 20.4 percent, year-over-year jump in backlog orders for private jets compared to Q2 of the previous year. This indicates that demand is strong and new private aircraft will be delivered to corporate and individual customers over the next couple of years.[20] A resilient market logically translates to the expansion of the size of the global fleet of private jets.



Source: Global Jet Capital. Some of the figures may change because of delays in reporting.

Estimates vary depending on the source, but there are approximately 25,200 private jets currently in service with the U.S. hosting two-thirds of the global fleet.[21] The number of private jets in operation is expected to grow at an annual rate of 3 percent over the next decade. Honeywell Aerospace expects 8,500 private jets—valued at $283 billion—to be delivered within this timeframe with purchasers prioritizing range, low operating costs, and passenger capacity.[22]

Fractional ownership has also dramatically expanded since it offers ultra-high net worth individuals a reduction in upfront costs when purchasing a private jet. As a result, the fractional fleet has grown by 65 percent since 2019. [23] NetJets, one of the largest fractional jet and charter service providers and owned by Berkshire Hathaway, reported a 15.5 percent increase year-over-year in revenue in the first six months of 2026.[24] This growing demand and delivery of new jets translates to a larger carbon footprint by the jet-owning oligarchy and private jet class.

Emissions: Indefensible Polluters

The private jet industry has worked hard to shield itself from climate scrutiny by pointing to aggregate data of the carbon costs of private aviation.[25] After all, private jets produced just a portion—between 2 percent and 4 percent—of global aviation emissions in 2023.[26] All aviation accounts for 2.5 percent of global emissions, contributing 4 percent to historical global warming to date.[27]

The intensity of carbon emissions per person on a private jet, however, is substantially more than that of a passenger utilizing commercial aviation, rail, or automobiles. According to a 2021 report by Transport & Environment, a private flight is about 10 to 14 times more emissions intensive per passenger than a commercial flight with the exact emissions intensity depending on the aircraft.[28]

Another analysis found that a private jet passenger is often responsible for over ten times or more the emissions of a commercial airline passenger and roughly 50 times those of a passenger traveling the same route by rail, with the disparity exceeding 200 times on rail systems powered by low-carbon electricity.[29]

Private jet emissions vary widely depending on the length of flight, type of aircraft, and fuel consumption. Our new IPS Private Jet Emission Tracker will facilitate even more accurate measurements of emissions in the future.

These emission estimates do not include the damages caused by high flying radiation-forcing impacts of private jets which can multiply the damages. Estimates of the climate impact of private jets that rely solely on calculations of CO_2 emissions can greatly underestimate their true environmental harm because they exclude non-CO_2 effects associated with high-altitude aviation, such as contrail formation and other atmospheric changes captured by estimates of "effective radiative forcing." When these effects are considered, the total warming impact of private jet travel per passenger can be significantly greater than that of other forms of transportation.[30]

Private jets typically travel at higher altitudes than standard commercial airliners. One analysis found that private aircraft spend 45.4 percent of total flight time above 30,000 feet and 21.4 percent of the time flying above 40,000 feet, suggesting that

a share of emissions enters sensitive layers of the atmosphere with relevance for non-CO_2 radiative forcing.[31]

Private jets flying high in the atmosphere emit water vapor, sulfur aerosols, and other particulate matter that contribute to the formation of contrails. These contrails evolve into heat-trapping cirrus clouds that block outgoing infrared radiation, contributing to net warming effects. Effective radiative forcing leads to impacts two to four times greater than those caused by CO_2 emissions alone.[32]

In a single flight, a private jet can emit more greenhouse gases than the average person emits in an entire year. These empirical facts become even more alarming when we consider how the use of private jets—and thus private jet emissions—has accelerated in recent years.[33] In a single year, some private jet frequent fliers produce approximately 500 times more carbon emissions than the average person.[34]

IPS developed a standardized methodology to compare the per-person emissions of a passenger on a private jet versus other modes of transportation, namely commercial flights and rail, traveling specific transit corridors that the ultra-wealthy often frequent.
First, we identified the "passenger footprint": the total emissions, per passenger, per trip.

$$Passenger\ Footprint = \frac{Total\ Trip\ Emissions}{Occupancy}$$

We also calculated emissions intensity—emissions per passenger-kilometer—so that we can compare emissions of different transportation modes across different trip lengths.

$$Emissions\ Intensity = \frac{Total\ Trip\ Emissions}{Occupancy\ \times Distance\ Traveled\ (km)}$$

Rather than assuming flights lift off only when full, we consider the average occupancy rates of private flights. We also look at different great-circle distances—for example, private flights leaving Teterboro, New Jersey travel different distances than commercial flights departing from LaGuardia Airport in New York, even though both locations service travelers departing from New York.

CASE STUDIES

The short-haul flight between New York City and Washington, D.C. is a common private flight for the ultrarich journeying from the country's financial center to its governmental one.

Corridor: NYC → DC						
Transportation Mode	**Origin**	**Destination**	**Route Distance (km)**	**Passenger Basis**	**Total Emissions Per Passenger (CO_2)**	**Emissions Intensity (CO_2/passenger-km)**
Intercity Rail (Amtrak Northeast Corridor)	Penn Station, New York	Union Station, Washington, DC	364	EPA rail standard	5.2 kg	14.3 g
Commercial Flight	LaGuardia Airport (LGA)	Reagan National Airport (DCA)	345	EPA short haul standard	44.38 kg	128.62 g
Private Flight	Teterboro Airport (TEB)	Dulles International Airport (IAD)	359	2.8 average/flight	538.5 kg	1,500 g

An ultra-high net worth individual taking a short-haul private flight between New York and Washington, DC is nearly **105 times** more emissions intensive than a person who took rail. Versus a commercial flight, a private flight is roughly **12 times** as emissions intensive.

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Teterboro and Palm Beach are two of the busiest airports servicing private aviation.

Corridor: NYC → Palm Beach, Florida						
Transportation Mode	**Origin**	**Destination**	**Route Distance (km)**	**Passenger Basis**	**Total Emissions Per Passenger (CO_2)**	**Emissions Intensity (CO_2/passenger-km)**

Corridor: NYC → Palm Beach, Florida						
Commercial Flight	LaGuardia Airport (LGA)	Palm Beach International Airport (DJT)	1,665	EPA medium haul standard	133.46 kg	80.16 g
Private Flight	Teterboro Airport (TEB), Teterboro, New Jersey	Palm Beach International Airport (DJT)	1,667	2.8 average/flight	2,500.5 kg	1,500 g

A private flight between New York and Palm Beach is nearly **19 times** as emissions intensive per passenger-km as a commercial flight between the two cities.

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Corridor: Los Angeles → Las Vegas						
Transportation Mode	**Origin**	**Destination**	**Route Distance (km)**	**Passenger Basis**	**Total Emissions Per Passenger (CO_2)**	**Emissions Intensity (CO_2/passenger-km)**
Commercial Flight	Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)	Harry Reid International Airport (LAS)	380	EPA short haul standard	48.88 kg	128.62 g
Private Flight	Van Nuys Airport (VNY)	Henderson Executive Airport (HND), Henderson, NV	363	2.8 average/ flight	544.5 kg	1,500 g

A private flight between Los Angeles and Las Vegas is roughly **12 times** as emissions intensive per passenger-km as a commercial flight between the two hubs.

Private jets carry far fewer passengers than commercial aircraft yet represent a significant number of flights traveling through the country's federally managed airspace that require air traffic control services. In 2024, the Department of Transportation said that while private flights accounted for 7 percent of flights

handled by the FAA, they contributed just 0.6 percent of the taxes that make up the FAA's Airport and Airway Trust Fund.[35]

A broader measure of flight activity suggests many more private jets in the skies. FAA data show approximately 2,550,846 private jet flights in fiscal year 2024, representing roughly 15.8 percent of the 16,191,379 total flights handled by the FAA during that period.[36] The FAA's business jet category is based on aircraft type and can therefore include charter flights and other commercially operated business jets such as air taxis—aircraft that still typically carry only a few passengers per flight and are thus far more emissions intensive per passenger than the average commercial flight.

The Super Polluting Elite

- Elon Musk took 320 flights in 2024, covering 461,191 miles and emitting an estimated 5,279 metric tons of carbon.
- Bill Gates recorded 273 flights, burning approximately 478,920 gallons of fuel and emitting an estimated 4,787 metric tons of CO.
- Eric Schmidt, the former CFO of Google, flew 493 times, covering 612,578 miles.[37]

Short-Haul Flights

The super-polluters are notorious for traveling on short-haul flights—defined as any private flight by some researchers at less than 210 to 300 miles—that could easily have been substituted for less carbon intensive forms of transportation. Private jets burn fuel at a higher rate during liftoff. Therefore, they are less energy efficient than other methods of travel.

One study estimated that 18.9 percent of private flights are shorter than 200 kilometers or 130 miles. Many of these flights do not carry any passengers or they're on their way to pick up passengers.[38]

Socialite Kylie Jenner was criticized for her 17-minute flight between two Los Angeles area airports in her $72 million private jet.[39] Other celebrities like professional boxer Floyd Mayweather, country star Kenny Chesney, professional golfer Jack Nicklaus, and rapper Drake faced similar backlash for flights that lasted less than 21 minutes.

In our study of 18 months of private jet activity at Laurence G. Hanscom Field, a general aviation airport outside Boston, we found that 81 percent of flights were short-haul flights, that is, they were airborne for less than three hours. More egregiously, 41 percent were under one hour and 14 percent were less than half an hour. These flights included trips to popular vacation spots like Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and the Hamptons. In contrast, only 2 percent of Hanscom flights were six hours or longer.[40]

Business Aviation or Luxury Recreation Travel?

The private jet lobby cleverly brands their sector as "business aviation." This conjures up images of industrious CEOs who efficiently manage their time instead of frittering away at busy airports. There are, of course, examples to support this claim, and there are several corporations that require top managers to fly private for efficiency and security reasons.[41]

But the industry should be properly understood as the Luxury Private Jet (LPJ) sector. A large percentage of private flights are deployed for recreational and luxury travel, preferring convenience to all other forms of less carbon intensive modes of transport.

It is difficult to track what percentage of private jet travel is used for business purposes. Like any traveler, many journeys are not exclusively business trips though they may be classified as such to reap certain tax benefits.

Researchers have considered factors such as weekend and seasonal departures, and whether their destinations are primarily vacation, luxury, or recreational hot spots. For example, the Bandon State Airport is a short 10-minute drive from the world-famous Bandon Dunes Golf Resort in Oregon. The airport does not handle any commercial passenger flights. Therefore, most private jets that arrive and depart are recreational in nature. But there is a grey area: is a golf match between an ultra-high net worth individual and a CEO of the company the former would like to buy a business or recreational trip?

In IPS research about Hanscom Field, authors cautioned on the conservative side of scoring flights for leisure and they still concluded that that 49 percent of all private jet activity were recreational.[42] In addition to the short-haul flights to premier locations like Nantucket, there were flights to renowned recreational and tourist destinations like Aspen, Colorado, Jackson, Wyoming, Venice, Italy, and Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Our findings reinforced a four-year analysis (between 2007-2010) of FAA flight records conducted by *The Wall Street Journal* in 2011 that found 30 percent of corporate flights were to or from resort destinations, with as many as 50 percent of flights were recreational where executives owned a residential property.[43]

Private Jets to Summer Camp

Elite summer camps that cater to the children of the ultrawealthy have always existed. It was not long ago when even wealthy families would load up the station wagon to take an hours-long road trip to drop their children off at rural sleepaway camps. But now, wealthy campers are arriving and departing in more extravagant fashion—by private jet, helicopter or seaplane.[44]

Blade is an on-demand charter company that has been offering camper transportation and visiting day services for nearly 10 years.[45] According to its CEO, Rob Wiesenthal, the Blade to camp business has seen dramatic growth over the past year alone.

Tuition at these pricy summer camps—often lasting seven weeks—can range from $18,000 to $20,000. But camp costs may pale in comparison to what ultrawealthy parents spend just to visit their children.[46] Yet from their perspectives, such expenditures may be worth it from the business side of things too, because these summer camps provide opportunities to meet and network with other ultra-high net worth families.[47]

Small municipal and regional airports, usually sleepy with a few flights a day, find themselves inundated with hundreds of private jets on camp turnover weekends or visiting days.[48] Air charter operators are also under pressure to deliver. Camp Laurel in Maine has filed a lawsuit against White Plains Aviation Partners and are seeking $355,000 in damages for failure to provide contracted air transport services.[49]

Carnivals of Carbon Consumption

Some of the biggest polluting events occur when global billionaires and other 0.1 percenters flock together to see and be seen at politically or culturally relevant film festivals, forums, or athletic competitions. These global events set off “carbon bombs” of emissions.

In a span of five-and-half weeks, the 2026 FIFA World Cup saw over 92,000 private jet flights between the 16 host cities, contributing a whopping 147 kilotons of excess emissions, the equivalent of 34,000 gas guzzling cars driving for a year.[50] FIFA President Gianni Infantino was the most conspicuous jet setter. He traveled close to 70,000 miles on a Gulfstream G650ER gifted to him by the royal family of Qatar. He landed in several cities multiple times including six trips to Miami.[51] He took a 27-minute short-haul flight from Seattle to Vancouver, and a non-tournament-related long-haul journey to Doha.

330 private jets crowded at Teteboro Airport
in NJ during FIFA World Cup 2026

Other high-profile events can attract hundreds of individual flights and generate considerable emissions, ranging from 1.5 kilotons of CO_2 during Super Bowl LVII in Glendale, Arizona to 14.7 kilotons at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.[52] Total emissions from these events are likely to be considerably higher as affluent attendees may also use helicopters or yacht to arrive if a ceremony or sporting event is located in a coastal city.

Some of the largest global events attracting the luxury private jet class include:

- Davos World Economic Forum held every January in Switzerland.
- The Super Bowl held every February in the United States.
- Masters Golf Tournament held every April in the United States.
- The Kentucky Derby held every May in the United States.
- Cannes Film Festival normally held every May in France.
- Monaco Superyacht Show held every September in Monaco.

Private Jet Expansion: Coming to an Airport Near You

The growing demand for private jets has led to a shortage of hanger space, especially at smaller airports.

The Biden administration's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, created the $14.5 billion Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) program. The five-year AIG program—running from fiscal years 2022 to 2026—makes resources available for airport improvement projects including those involving runways, taxiways, hangar capacity, safety equipment, terminals, and more.[53]

Of the country's 19,829 total airports, 5,176 are designated for public use.[54] However, an airport that is open to public use does not mean that it will serve commercial flights or that it is a publicly owned entity. Public use airports can have no or little scheduled passenger service and be primarily used for general aviation purposes, which includes private jets.

To be eligible for Airport Infrastructure Grants and other funding, airports generally need to be one of the approximately 3,300 airports in the National Plan of

Integrated Airport Systems—which includes all commercial airports, reliever airports, and "selected" publicly owned general aviation airports, per the FAA.[55]

Airport categories	Description
Commercial airport	Commercial service airports are publicly owned airports that provide scheduled service and have at least 2,500 passenger boardings per year. Primary commercial airports have more than 10,000 passenger boardings each year.
Reliever airport	Reliever airports are intended to provide congestion "relief" to commercial airports and expand general aviation access.
General aviation airport	General aviation airports do not offer scheduled flights or have scheduled service with fewer than 2,500 passenger boardings each year.

While primary airports were collectively eligible for up to $2.39 billion in Airport Infrastructure Grant funds each year, up to $500 million was set aside for smaller airports—including many reliever and general aviation airports. Of the roughly $7.58 billion in grant awards made as of August 2026, about $1.25 billion—more than 16 percent—went to non-primary airports that have little or no scheduled passenger service and primarily support private jets and other general aviation.

Many of these airports, as well as smaller primary airports, were awarded grants for projects that appear likely to benefit private jet aviation, including:

- New or expanded hangars for storage of private aircraft.
- Apron construction or expansion to support where aircraft park or are serviced.
- Runway extension or strengthening to accommodate larger jets.
- Constructing or improving taxi lanes, which connect taxiways to parking areas and hangars.
- New or expanded fuel facilities.

In a dataset of 4,025 AIG grants awarded through 2026 and benefiting 986 distinct airports or airport groups, we flagged 1,443 grants—more than a third of all grants—as including projects with a strong likelihood of benefiting private jet aviation. In total, these grants were worth more than $1.13 billion.

A snapshot of AIG-funded airports

Nantucket Memorial Airport

Nantucket Memorial Airport in Massachusetts is a major hub used by jetsetters visiting the island of Nantucket. The airport—used by commercial travelers as well as those on private jets—was awarded a $2.8 million Airport Infrastructure Grant in fiscal year 2023 to expand its apron. The airport has also pursued further apron expansion as planes using the airport have grown larger. "Planes are just bigger across all aircraft categories," the airport manager told the *Nantucket Current* in 2024. He specifically called attention to the growth in luxury private jets by noting that the Gulfstream VII has a 26 percent larger footprint than the Gulfstream V.[56]

Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport

Montana's Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport, the private jet gateway to Yellowstone National Park and the Big Sky resort area, was awarded several different Airport Infrastructure Grants.

As early as 2015, the airport board was told about complaints from "some of the large private jet owners" who utilized the nearby and exclusive Yellowstone Club. According to airport authority meeting minutes, the jet owners were concerned about aircraft parking and storage limitations and were "taking their jets to warmer climates" as a result.[57]

Such pressure from jet owners illustrates the demand for infrastructure projects to accommodate large private jets at the airport. Years later, AIG projects worth $6.6 million included taxiway construction, expansion of a general aviation tie-down apron, and rehabilitation of the east general aviation apron.[58]

Scottsdale Airport

Arizona's Scottsdale Airport is a reliever airport without scheduled passenger service, so Scottsdale's $2.7 million in AIG funding supports an airport used exclusively for general aviation. The city of Scottsdale, which owns the airport, advertises the airport's "close proximity to a wide range of world-class resorts, hotels, restaurants, and golf courses."[59]

Before Super Bowl 2023 and the PGA Tour's Phoenix Open, both held on the same weekend, the airport received $5.4 million in federal grants—including $763,000 in AIG money—to reconfigure taxiways and add an aircraft run-up area in preparation for the events.[60] The city later said the airport handled 490 private jet operations with 911 aircraft parked at the airport during the event weekend.[61] Among other projects, AIG funds also supported reconstruction of apron lighting and apron rehabilitation.

Interestingly, pilots of smaller general aviation aircraft sued the airport over redevelopment that they said pushed out smaller planes (e.g., propeller planes) so that the airport could host more luxury private jets. "The FAA is subsidizing the super-rich and kicking the [general aviation] community to the weeds," one aircraft owner told Scottsdale Progress in 2022. "Infrastructure for the .01 percent of the population is what this is," he said, referring to the development ahead of the Super Bowl.[62] The lawsuit was eventually dropped.[63]

A Campaign to Stop a Private Jet Expansion at Hanscom Field

A coalition of over 120 state and local organizations in Massachusetts came together to oppose the expansion of private jet hanger capacity at Laurence G. Hanscom Field.

Hanscom Field is New England's largest private jet airport. It is located in the town of Bedford—approximately 20 miles from Boston—and borders Concord, Lexington, Bedford, and Lincoln.

Private developers proposed a massive new development that seeks to double the hangar capacity for private jets. The airport already handles about 38,000 private jet flights per year.

The coalition, **Stop Private Jet Expansion at Hanscom or Anywhere**, has pressed for the cancellation of the project. While other communities in the Bay State are working to drastically reduce their carbon footprint, private developers are actively undermining their goals by wanting to expand private jet infrastructure at Hanscom. These private jets are mainly for the

ultrawealthy who take luxury trips to nearby resort destinations like Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.

In the coming months, the eyes of the world are on Hanscom Field and whether this expansion project will be defeated. For more information, please see: www.stopprivatejetexpansion.org

PART TWO: SHIFTING COSTS

As the midterm elections approach this fall, the aviation industry is pressing to secure yet another tax break by attaching a provision to an air traffic safety bill that is popular and moving forward. This is only the latest example of the ways the private jet lobby ensures that taxpayers and commercial travelers subsidize their extravagant travel choice. The private jet lobby works to shift costs off the private jet operators onto everyone else—and, under the current administration, is working to grab even more subsidies.

Air Space Subsidy

Commercial airline passengers pay several taxes and carrier-imposed fees whenever they purchase an airplane ticket. These taxes include a 7.5 percent transportation tax plus a $5.30 flight segment tax, and a passenger facility charge of up to $4.50 per flight.

The private jets class, by comparison, only pays a federal excise tax on jet fuel of 21.9 cents per gallon. The Department of Transportation estimates that private jets accounted for 7 percent of flights handled by the FAA in 2024 yet it contributed just 0.6 percent of the taxes and fees that flow to the Airport and Airway Trust Fund.[64]

President Biden introduced a phased-in fuel fee increase for private jets—from 21.9 cents to $1.06 per gallon—in his FY2025 Budget. But this policy was not enacted thanks to the opposition of the aviation lobby.[65]

How Private Jets Make the Commercial Flying Experience Worse

Most air travelers can relate to the deteriorating quality of the commercial air travel experience, mirroring a trend in technology that Corey Doctorow calls, "enshittification."[66] Frequent commercial customers are accustomed to crowded terminals, delays, cancelations, and tight seating. The aircraft boarding process has become a bizarre caste system that has less to do with efficiency and more about charging for luggage and selling status perks through upgrade fees and credit card loyalty. In security lines, we watch grandma get frisked, surrender our drinks, and

enjoy security guards riffling through luggage while confiscating squishy food items that could be explosives.

After the degrading experience of commercial air travel, we understand the attraction of a private jet. Private jet passengers can drive right up to plane side and load their hunting rifles, pets, and golf clubs right on board. There's no security screening, just a list of passengers.

This is what happens when the wealthiest and most powerful people in the country "opt-out" of a transportation system that the non-rich depend on. Thought experiment: If the private jet class depended on the commercial aviation system, would they tolerate it—and bring their considerable clout to improve it?

Private jets are making the commercial flying experience worse in several ways, in addition to the ultra-wealthy not having a stake in the system. In certain regions, private aircraft contribute to airspace congestion and delays, which compound during bad weather events. Competition for pilots has contributed to shortages and higher costs.

Pilot Shortages Leading to Flight Delays and Higher Costs

Competition between commercial airlines and the private jets has led to the private jet sector successfully scooping up newly trained pilots through higher salaries and perks.

In July, Minnesota-based Sun Country Airlines removed 348 departures from its September 2026 schedule due to staffing issues. Industry leaders say the shortage is being felt by airlines of all sizes, but small and regional carriers are more directly impacted. Several factors are contributing to staffing shortages like the FAA's mandate that compels pilots to retire at the age of 65, an overall increased demand for air travel, and a bottleneck in pilot training caused by a lack of experienced pilots and expensive flight schools.[67]

The ultrawealthy are flying private more—and they need staff to support them. For private jet operators, hiring and retaining experienced pilots requires raising wages and benefits. Private jet captains can earn higher salaries faster than their commercial counterparts.[68] Corporate jet captains can potentially earn salaries up

to $300,000 a year. For those in the industry, the rise in compensation packages for charter captains represents "a fundamental restructuring of aviation's talent ecosystem."[69]

To compete for pilots, private jet and charter companies are offering sign-on bonuses of $20,000 to $100,000 paid in installments over several years. Private operators will also offer retention or longevity bonuses of about $50,000 every three to five years to discourage pilots from taking a commercial job. A private corporation pilot base salary average is $180,000 but could increase to $230,000 after benefits. ZipRecruiter reports the average annual pay of a private jet pilot as $130,000 in 2026. Some salaries are as high as $200,000.

Pilots choose to fly private jets and charters for many reasons including working in non-corporate environment, flexibility, and "a long-term personal fit with the owners or executives of those companies." Commercial pilots spend a lot of time "living in hotels away from home and family" while pilots for private airlines fly out of a single locale with predictable rotations and less overall commuting, equating to a different and often preferable standard of living.[70]

The Private Jet Lobby: Protectors of Privilege

Concentrated wealth enables the top 0.1 percent to exercise the power to hire lobbyists and fund politicians to block accountability reforms and win tax breaks and secrecy provisions.

For private jet high flyers and manufacturers, the lead association is the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA). The NBAA also has a network of state affiliates, often staffed part-time by people in the aviation industry. NBAA and its state affiliates, along with the General Aviation Manufacturers Association and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, constitute a formidable legislative force. NBAA spent $1.6 million and $1.8 million in 2024 and 2025, respectively.[71]

During these last two years, the private jet lobby won the permanent extension of accelerated bonus depreciation in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) of 2025 and expanded secrecy provisions in the FAA Reauthorization Act.[72] And now it's working to insert another tax avoidance measure into the 2026 ALERT Act, a piece of legislation intended to expand airline safety.

The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA)

Founded in 1947 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the NBAA has a mission "to foster an environment that allows business aviation to thrive in the United States and around the world."[73] Like many trade associations, they offer services and product discounts to their members.

The NBAA is a 501(c)(6) organization, or business league, that may engage in unlimited political lobbying on behalf of its estimated 10,000 members. NBAA's annual revenue in 2024 was $41 million with $18.5 million in salary expenses including a robust team of lobbyists, plus $2 million a year on government affairs, policy and advocacy.[74] NBAA's 2026 Q2 report shows lobbying spending up to $420,000 from $380,000 in Q1. Specifically, priorities in this legislative session have included: sustainable aviation fuels, advanced air mobility certification timelines, and tax policy uncertainty.[75]

Additional national lobbying happens through the NBAA-PAC which only accepts donations from NBAA members.[76] Top donors to the PAC in the 2024 election cycle included: Kristie Greco Johnson, NBAA's Senior VP, Government Affairs, Public Policy & Advocacy; Chris Rocheleau, NBAA's Chief Operating Officer; Aviation International News founder Wilson Leach; General Communications founder Ron Duncan; and Choice Hotels International Investor Relations Monte Koch.[77]

In total, NBAA-PAC spent $143,500 on both Republicans ($74,000) and Democrats ($69,500). Top House Members to receive PAC funds in 2024 were mostly members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure such as Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO), Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA), Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AK), Dina Titus (D-NV), Julia Brownley (D-CA), Garret Graves (R-LA), and Val Hoyle (D-OR). Other House Member recipients in 2024 include: Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK) who is the Chair of the Committee on Appropriations, Steve Cohen (D-TN) who is on the Committee on Intelligence, and Jay Obernolte (R-CA) who sits on the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

From the Senate, NBAA-PAC donated mostly to members on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation- Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security such as: Deb Fisher (R-NE), Jerry Morgan (R-KS), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Ted Cruz (R-TX), Tim Sheehy (R-MT), Colin Allred (D-TX), and Ted Budd (R-

NC). In total, Senate Republicans received $19,500 and Senate Democrats $12,000.[78]

As a general aviation pilot and Chair of the House Transportation Committee, Missouri Representative Sam Graves received by far the most financial support from NBAA, as Chair of the House Transportation Committee. NBAA's PAC made payments to Rep. Graves through different avenues in 2024. His campaign received $10,000, his Show-Me PAC received $5,000, and the organization Sam Graves for Congress took in $12,500, all in 2024.[79]

Other notable payments from the NBAA-PAC include: Congressional Black Caucus PAC ($10K), Puget PAC (affiliated with Rick Larsen, D-WA) ($8K), California Victory Fund 2024 ($5K), Cantwell Victory 2024 ($5K), Johnson Leadership Fund ($5K), Crapo Victory Committee ($2.5K), Scalise Leadership Fund ($2.5K), McCarthy Victory Fund ($2.5K), and McConnell for the Majority ($2.5K).[80]

NBAA-PAC also paid the following vendors: Citizens to Elect Rick Larsen ($9K), Puget PAC ($6.5K), Johnson Leadership Fund ($5K), Rosen for Nevada ($5K), Titus for Congress ($5K), Moran for Kansas ($5K), and many more in total $146K to federal candidates.[81]

Alongside their formal lobbying PAC, NBAA has also organized a Leadership Council of 114 known members to advocate for private aviation interests. While some Leadership Council members are known and listed on NBAA's website, the website notes there are many Leadership Council members who wish to remain anonymous. Public Leadership Council members include aviation and non-aviation-based businesses. Some of the aviation businesses include Airbus Corporate Jets, Boeing, Cessna, and Jet Aviation. Some of the non-aviation businesses include Adobe, Bank of America, Chick-fil-A, Dell Technologies, Disney Aviation Group, General Communication, Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise Company, Home Depot Aviation Dept., Nationwide, Netflix, Pfizer, Target Corporation, Verizon Aviation, and Walmart, Inc.[82]

A key ally in the halls of Congress is the House General Aviation Caucus. The caucus was founded in 2009 and includes over 200 congressional representatives from all states but Delaware, Vermont, and Wyoming. NBAA CEO Ed Bolen attributes the large number of caucus members to a "recognition by Congress that general

aviation creates jobs, provides a transportation lifeline to communities across the country, helps businesses succeed and supports people and communities in times of crisis."[83] The creation of the House GA Caucus was initiated and is currently led by Rep. Sam Graves, though he is on his way to retirement.[84]

Through his position as the chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure, Rep. Graves sponsored the Airspace Location and Enhancement Risk Transparency (ALERT) Act. The act incorporates 50 of the National Transportation Safety Board's safety recommendations in the aftermath of a collision between a regional airliner and a Black Hawk helicopter in January 2025, though the original legislation was criticized because it "didn't go far enough on the ADS-B/In mandate and the use of such technologies in the U.S. military."[85]

ADS-B is the signal system that requires planes to broadcast altitude, speed, route, and identity. However, the final bill that passed "requires ADS-B/In and corresponding collision prevention technology on all aircraft required to have ADS-B/Out by December 21, 2031." It also requires updates on "helicopter safety and separation requirements, calls to improvements to air traffic control training and processes, directs the FAA to establish a database to monitor close calls, addresses safety culture and data-sharing shortcomings that the accident highlighted, strengthens military aircraft safety standards and cooperation with the FAA, and strengthens oversight of flight operations in congested airspace, among other provisions." The ALERT Act is on its way to being aligned to the Senate's Rotor Act, which includes an ADS-B mandate.[86]

The fight over ADS-B/In and Out technology is a contentious one in the general aviation community because it allows aircraft to communicate their speed and location with each other. Private jet advocates, including Rep. Graves and ALERT Act co-author, Rep. Bob Onder, oppose requiring this technology on certain aircraft because it shares identifying information from one aircraft to another or to air traffic control.

Rep. Bob Onder wrote a provision in the ALERT Act prohibiting its use because states and local officials will be able to use aircraft-location data-information to identify aircraft" for the purposes of obtaining revenue" from operators. Opponents to Rep. Onder's provision warned Congress that the provision blocks "one of the tools they use to enforce property, sales and use taxes on aircraft."

County assessors say to verify aircraft ownership, they are supposed to search FAA records that may have redacted information and "the assessor may not be able to identify certain aircraft as property which is assessable in that county." If local governments cannot identify an aircraft's ownership, it means local governments lose out on taxable revenue.[87] From this position it appears the NBAA, Rep. Graves, and Onder, would prefer to sacrifice public safety and tax revenue to help the business aviation community maintain its secrecy. ***See our proposal in the Solutions section to strip secrecy provisions from the ALERT Act.***

Fending Off Luxury Taxes in Washington State

Legislators in the state of Washington were targeted by federal and state business aviation lobbyists after the passage of a luxury aircraft tax. Senate Bill 5801, which passed in May 2025, imposed a 10 percent tax on aircraft over $500,000. The regulation was part of a suite of new laws targeting conspicuous consumption and was framed as a luxury tax.[88]

Yet after the legislation passed, the NBAA publicly released a comment on May 5, 2025, opposing the law and urging private jet operators to "make their voices heard."[89] Subsequently, legislation in the form of HB 2711 was put forward to repeal the tax. The repeal bill, which also generates revenue to subsidize sustainable aviation fuel development, passed the Washington State House in March 2026.[90]

Change in state policy preferences was a direct result of lobbying by the NBAA and aligned interests, publicly acknowledged by the governor and the NBAA itself. The National Air Transportation Association was directly involved in lobbying the Washington State legislature and Governor Ferguson, and money flowed through many coordinated entities throughout the industry.

Washington State's regressive move is indicative of the NBAA's political strategy of preventing state-level regulation while relying on federal inaction. To further incentivize state governments away from pursuing effective taxation against private aviation, sustainable aviation fuels are used as an effective political tool to offer an industry-friendly alternative to systemic change.

Private Jet Secrecy

The nation's airspace is a common asset, and air traffic control is a public service paid for by taxpayers and commercial air passengers. How these assets and services are used is a matter of public concern.

As alarm over carbon emissions grows, the public has a right to know about private jet activities and the identity of the super-emitters who are burning up the planet and shifting costs to everyone else.

Corporate and private jets utilize a growing share of the nation's airspace and FAA air traffic control resources. They also compound noise problems in residential neighborhoods near airports that cater to private jets. Sophisticated private jets operate at higher altitudes taxing the nation's air traffic management system and emitting at least ten to twenty times more climate-damaging emissions per passenger than those of commercial aircraft.

Public reporting of aircraft movements is essential to understanding air space congestion and climate impacts of private jets. It is also useful for corporate shareholders interested in understanding their companies' use of such aircraft and to see whether aircraft are being used primarily for business purposes. Public disclosure has also been vital in tracking gifts of air travel extended to elected officials and members of the judiciary. Finally, tracking jets enables municipal airports and tax authorities to charge proper use fees and taxes to private jet operators.

To thwart these public interests, the private jet lobby has used its clout to steadily, over the last fifteen years, move more private jet activity into the shadows. The privilege of secrecy is now trampling the public's right to know who is using public airspace.

The 2025 FAA Reauthorization bill extended and strengthened the ability of private jet owners to remove their flights from public disclosure. But this is only the latest chapter in a multi-decade effort to shroud private jet operations from public scrutiny.

The History of the Secrecy Push

With the passage of the Open Government Act (Public Law 110-174, 2007) in 2007, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) made available more information about the movement and ownership of private aircraft. The private jet lobby responded immediately by lobbying for the establishment of the Block Aircraft Registration Request (BARR) program that allowed private jet operators to opt out of public registries, ostensibly for security reasons.

In December 2008, *ProPublica* filed a data request with the FAA challenging the legality of the BARR program and seeking ownership registration information and flight data for public aircraft including departure and destination information. In response, the NBAA sued to block disclosure of the information requested by *ProPublica.* In February 2010, a federal court ruled against the NBAA, and the FAA released data to *ProPublica* and the public.[91] This trove of data enabled public interest researchers and organizations to get an accurate picture of private jet operations, including an analysis by *The Wall Street Journal* about recreational uses of private jet travel.[92]

In August 2011, the FAA implemented significant changes to the BARR program by requiring participants to submit written notice of a Certified Security Concern to the FAA. In other words, users had to justify their removal from the public registry demonstrating a security threat to the operators or passengers. Because there were few documented security threats, very few private jets could justify removal from the public registry. Private jet lobbyists shifted their arguments from security to privacy. The Business Roundtable joined the National Association of Manufacturers, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce wrote a letter to the FAA advocating for shifting the basis of the BARR program to privacy as an American value, rather than a documented security risk.

In June 2011, a bipartisan group of 26 senators led by Senators Mark Begich (D-AK) and Pat Roberts (R-KS) called upon FAA Administrator Hood to not dismantle the BARR program, again centering privacy as the basis of their argument. In December 2011, Congress and the FAA reinstated the BARR program, but no longer required a certified security risk to be documented.[93]

In 2018, Congress replaced the BARR program with the Limiting Aircraft Data Displayed (LADD) program as a part of the FAA Re-Authorization Bill (2018 HR 254 FAA Reauthorization Bill: Section 566, Right to Privacy When Using Air Traffic Control System). Provisions of the reauthorization bill greatly expanded privacy protections of aircraft owners, leading to a mass erasure of private flight information from public view.[94]

In 2017, the movements of 23,884 aircraft had been removed from public disclosure. By the end of 2023, the number had risen to 52,573, representing more than 25 percent of the nation's registered aircraft. Since January 2022 alone, 19,540 aircraft were added to the "do not disclose" list. This information was obtained by the Institute for Policy Studies through filing a Freedom of Information (FOIA) request to the FAA in 2024.

Thus, a quarter of the nation's aircraft, many of them private turbojets and turboprops, have been removed from scrutiny about their climate impacts, their effect on airspace overcrowding, or their role in adding noise pollution to residential neighborhoods near urban and suburban airports, and at rural airports serving resorts frequented by America's wealthiest citizens.

In January 2025, IPS filed a second FOIA to get additional data. This request was denied based on the Trump administration's determination that "FAA Administrator will withhold 'the registration number and other similar identifiable data or information' of aircraft upon request of the aircraft owner or operator. So, aircraft identification information and data pertaining to noncommercial flights for aircraft on the LADD list are being withheld on this basis."[95]

In our solutions section we advocate for balancing security needs and public disclosure.

Greenwashing the Skies: Sustainable Aviation Fuels

The effort to simply substitute conventional jet fuel with so-called "sustainable aviation fuels" (SAFs) is a greenscreen and distraction. While there may be some potential for electrification of small-scale, short-haul aviation, there is no scalable or cost-effective alternative to kerosene-based jet fuels developing at the speed of climate change.

One of the principal critiques leveled against both private and commercial aviation is the undeniable negative impact air travel has on climate change. A passenger survey conducted in April revealed that the majority of customers desire guilt free and climate friendly air travel and support initiatives that seek to reduce the industry's carbon footprint.[96] In October 2021, at a time when other economic sectors were pledging to reach net zero emissions by the middle of the century, leaders in the aviation industry vowed to develop a strategy that would effectively decarbonize its global fleet.[97]

The greening of air travel primarily rests on the shoulders of sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs), a jet fuel made from renewable feedstocks or renewable electricity (e-SAFs) as opposed to being derived from conventional fossil fuels. The U.S. is currently the world's largest SAF producer, and they are expected to account for more than a third of all SAF production by 2030.[98]

At first glance, the aviation industry's prioritization of SAFs is completely rational. SAFs can be blended with conventional jet fuel and integrated immediately without the need to redesign and manufacture new planes or build new specialized pipelines to deliver alternative liquid fuels. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) expects that SAFs will be able to single-handedly reduce carbon emissions by two-thirds over the next two decades.[99]

In the spring of 2024, more than 50 companies and organizations came together to form the SAF Coalition. Their mission is to lobby lawmakers to pass legislation that provides the industry with the incentives needed to scale up SAF investment and production. The coalition represents different sectors of the SAF value chain. Their members include commercial airliners (Delta), private jet companies (NetJets), SAF producers (Montana Renewables), biotechnology firms (LanzaTech), agricultural and feedstock suppliers (Darling Ingredients), airports (San Francisco International Airport), and other major transportation hubs (Port of Seattle). The online retail giant Amazon is also a member.[100]

The SAF Coalition supports the passage of Securing America's Fuels Act, S. 3759 and H.R. 6518. The legislation seeks a four-year extension to the 45Z clean fuel production tax credit and the full restoration of its value after the Trump

administration lowered it from $1.75 to $1.00 per gallon.[101] They hope that this will stimulate private investment and boost domestic production.

But there are three problems with the sustainable aviation fuel industry. The first is that it continues to fail at representing a significant share of the global jet fuel market. Missed production targets appear to be a permanent feature of the SAF industry.[102] Even though the total volume of SAF production continues to increase annually, 240 million gallons produced in 2025, it remains limited. SAFs are expected to account for only 0.8 percent of the jet fuel market by the end of the year.[103] The disappointing production numbers caused IATA's Director General, Willie Walsh, to admit that the goal to reduce aviation emissions by 65 percent by 2050 is only going to get more challenging because the creation of a viable and dynamic SAF market has yet to materialize.[104]

The second problem with SAFs is its lack of price competitiveness. Since the aviation industry's net zero pledge five years ago, sustainable aviation fuels have failed to close the price gap with conventional jet fuels. The current price premium of SAFs is not the result of inefficiencies associated with a nascent market, but a structural feature of the industry.[105] Most renewable feedstocks—agricultural commodities like corn—contain oxygen that must be removed before it is converted into jet fuel. The deoxygenation process is costly and expanding the scale of manufacturing alone will not bring down prices. The most common and least expensive way to produce SAFs is through the hydro processed esters and fatty acids process, but there is not enough feedstock to meet global demand, thereby pushing up prices even further.[106]

Price parity will only become possible with hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer subsidies and consumer costs to develop a technology that currently does not exist. The U.S. has opted for the taxpayer to absorb the costs of the price premium, but the current 45Z tax credit has proven to be incapable of significantly increasing the supply of SAFs. As a result, SAFs are still two to four times more expensive than conventional jet fuels, thereby making widespread SAF adoption unlikely.[107]

The last problem with sustainable aviation fuels is that scaling up its production to meet the growing jet fuel demands of air transport actively contributes to climate breakdown.[108] The production of SAFs that require agricultural feedstocks will

involve deforestation that releases carbon into the atmosphere and creates a decades-long lag in biological sequestration.[109] For this reason, a researcher at the International Council on Clean Transportation, Andy Navarette, remarked that SAFs "may not reduce the life-cycle [greenhouse gas] emissions at all."[110]

Put simply, aviation is an incredibly difficult industry to decarbonize. SAFs are a false solution because they do not mitigate or assuage climate change, but instead contribute to it. In a time where overall food prices are going up, repurposing agricultural land to produce fuel and not food is unreasonable. State resources and private investment are better allocated towards making food affordable and decarbonizing other sectors of the economy.

SOLUTIONS: MAKING SURE PRIVATE JETS PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE

Private jets are the transportation fetish of some of the wealthiest and most powerful people on the planet. So, it is not surprising that when it comes to public policy, both at the federal and state level, they enjoy especially strong influence with lawmakers. Any public policy that might require private jets to pay their fair share is halted by industry-backed politicians. More maddening, the private jet lobby has won additional subsidies and privileges for those who need them the least. The result is the absurd reality that in some states, you will pay sales tax when you purchase a bicycle—but not if you purchase a used or new private jet.

In response to our scrutiny, research, and tracking, the private jet lobby has won additional secrecy provisions for private jet operators—and have made it harder for local airports to collect use fees when private jets pass through. The most immediate action would be to protect the rights of these jurisdictions to track and levy use fees on private jets.

Immediate Federal Action: Strip Private Jet Tax Avoidance Provision from Air Travel Safety Bill

There are several ways to ensure private jets pay their fair share. One is to strip pending air safety legislation of a private jet tax break.

A group of Republican lawmakers, working to serve the interests of private jet travelers, have inserted a tax avoidance mechanism for private jet operators into an air traffic safety bill pending in Congress. Lawmakers are pressing to pass the legislation before the 2026 mid-term elections.

The Airspace Location and Enhanced Risk Transparency (ALERT) Act was introduced after the deadly collision in January 2025 over the Potomac River between an American Eagle commercial flight and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter, killing 67 people.

The focus of the legislation is to establish new rules for air traffic controller training and helicopter routes around Reagan National Airport and the country. But a group of lawmakers have inserted a provision to prevent local, state and federal governments from using aircraft tracking technology to collect fees and taxes. State and local officials complain that this data access is essential to determining their user fees.

As discussed in the previous section on secrecy, the powerful private jet lobby has worked to make the tracking of private jets more difficult. They have won legislation, as part of the FAA reauthorization, to allow private jet operators to "opt-out" of public flight registries. This has put airport operators at a disadvantage as they attempt to collect taxes and fees for airport use from private jet operators.

Instead, airport operators rely on the ADS-B tracking system, which sends out pings from aircraft, to identify private jets that visit their airports and use their facilities—and send them bills. The pending legislation would prohibit airport operators from using this tracking technology to identify private jets and levying appropriate user fees and taxes.

The legislation—originally filed as a stand-alone bill called the Pilot and Aircraft Privacy Act—was inserted into the air safety bill that was moving because of public concern after the Potomac crash. The original tracking ban was introduced by Republican Senators Ted Budd (R-NC), Mike Rounds (R-SD), Tim Sheehy (R-MT), and Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) along with U.S. Rep Bob Onder (R-MO).

This cynical maneuver is not playing well with the public and local airport officials. A recent poll sponsored by the Consumer Action for a Strong Economy (CASE) found

that 84 percent believe it is inappropriate to "bury a tax break for the wealthy" in legislation designed to make air travel safer.[111]

"It's fairly obvious that you are giving a special interest break to exceptionally well-off people," said CASE's chairman Gerald Scimeca in an interview with Inside Sources. Scimeca lamented that such back-room deals are what cause people to lose faith in Congress.[112]

The survey found that 77 percent of voters believe it is simply not right that middle income households play by the rules and pay their taxes while a bill about air safety contains a tax break for the private jet owning oligarchy.

State and local airport operators have complained about the legislation, noting that having access to the data is necessary for collecting duties and property taxes associated with the jet's value. "Private aircraft owners go to great lengths to hide their aircraft from us," said Los Angeles County's assessor Jeff Prang in an interview with Politico. "This data helps us to identify where those aircraft are located."[113]

The data gathered from the ADS-B system has helped L.A.'s assessor's office track 1,000 planes with an assessed value of $3.5 billion, filling the county's coffers with $35 million in additional revenue.

The ADS-B data system has helped other states collect taxes that otherwise would have been avoided. Alabama's Department of Revenue estimates that it would lose $18 million in annual revenue if they were prohibited from using ADS-B data.

"These are extremely wealthy individuals who are not paying their taxes," said Representative Laura Friedman (D-CA) in an interview with *Politico*. "This is a tool that allows my county to collect what's owed to them. The bill should not be providing people ways to get around the law."[114]

At the time of writing, the House version of the ALERT Act legislation H.R. 7613 includes the tax break provision while the Senate version (S. 2503) does not. We call on lawmakers to pass the Senate version and strip out the tax break for private jet operators.

GIVING UP THE JET: What a Patriotic Millionaire and the Teamsters Have in Common

Stephen Prince is the founder of Card Market, a Tennessee-based company that makes gift cards for many national companies. He's also a leader with the Patriotic Millionaires, an organization that supports increasing taxes on wealthy individuals like himself.

Prince used to fly his private jet everywhere, including to hunt pheasants in rural Nebraska. But then in 2023, when he learned about the negative effects of private jets on the earth's climate, he decided to sell his jet. "There are many perks to being rich, but chief among them is private air travel," Prince said in an interview with *The Scotsman* in response to a proposal in Scotland to tax private jets. "[It's] truly a luxury's luxury… While I've never used cocaine, I'd bet it's less addictive than having a jet on standby." By punitively "punishing people's pockets," Prince predicts that Scotland could "inspire other countries to rein in private air travel and forge a new path in saving our shared planet."[115]

Meanwhile, over at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the union has renounced private jets for decades. An earlier era of union leadership at the Teamsters enjoyed the privileges of private jets. As part of internal reforms, initiated in 1991, the members of the Teamsters voted to sell their fleet of four private jets. Reformers and delegates championed the divestment of jets with the slogan, to "spend money on behalf of our members" rather than on internal luxury.[116]

There's no question that flying private jet is an extraordinary convenience. As Stephen Prince says, the comfort and convenience is addictive. But Prince and the Teamsters have both demonstrated that there's life after the private jet.

State Policy and Private Jets

Several states have pushed for legislation to require private jets to pay their fair share of taxes, user fees, and offset their carbon pollution. The private jet lobby—the National Business Aviation Association and its state affiliates—have worked to block these proposals. In some cases, the lobby has succeeded in wresting more public subsidies for private jet users.

Several states are reviewing the tax subsidies they provide for private jets. There are currently eight U.S. states that have full or near-total sales tax exemptions on the purchase of a private jet. These include Alaska, Montana, and New Hampshire who do not levy sales taxes at all at the state level. Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, and Rhode Island do have state sales taxes but do not impose them on aircraft, while Connecticut and Delaware exempt taxes if the aircraft is above a certain weight threshold. Three states—Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Texas—do not levy any taxes on aviation fuels.[117]

Washington State Private Jet Luxury Tax. As discussed above, in 2025, the Washington state legislature passed a 10 percent luxury tax on private jets valued over half a million dollars. But the private jet lobby swung into action to repeal the tax that would have raised an estimated $4 million to $5 million a year.[118]

The Vertical Aviation Association in Washington state crowed about their "significant victory" to their members by repealing the legislation before it was to be enacted in April 2026. In a communication with members, it thanked policymakers and "industry partners," saying their "engagement and advocacy were critical to achieving this outcome." The luxury tax was replaced with a mere $0.07 per gallon increase in fuel taxes. Half of these taxes were set to fund the development of sustainable aviation fuels, a false solution to our climate crisis.

Massachusetts Attempt to Repeal Sales Tax Exemption. If you purchase a bicycle or car in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you pay a 6.25 percent sales tax on your purchase. But not if you purchase a private jet. Tax fairness activists are pushing to repeal this sales tax exemption that will cost the state an estimated $25.3 million in 2026 and that disproportionately benefits the ultrawealthy. The Director of Research and Policy Analysis at the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, Phineas Baxandall, stated in testimony before the Massachusetts Revenue

Committee: “At a time when the wealthiest people in the country are being rewarded with extraordinary tax breaks while simultaneously human service programs are being eliminated and defunded, we should end this sales tax exemption for private jets and other aircrafts.”[119]

Florida: More Subsidies for Private Jets. While some states are working to ensure private jets pay their real fair share, Florida is moving in the wrong direction. In 2025, the Florida legislature voted to repeal the state aviation fuel excise tax of 4.27 cents per gallon on jet fuel and aviation gasoline. Sales taxes are also exempted.[120]

State Policy Action: Sales Taxes on Private Jets. States should review their sales tax policies and reconsider any exemptions towards private jet purchases. Exemptions should be eliminated and replaced with a realistic sales tax plus a luxury tax.

Federal Policy and Private Jets

At the federal level, the private jet lobby has effectively fended off meaningful taxes on private jets, keeping the jet fuel tax artificially low. A 2025 accomplishment was winning a permanent extension on tax breaks for private jet purchases in the 2025 “Big Beautiful Bill.” The industry has also lobbied to maintain secrecy for private jet operators.

Tax Break: Bonus Depreciation. One lucrative tax break for private jet purchasers is an acceleration of depreciation—or what is called “bonus depreciation.” When a business purchases a piece of equipment, it usually loses value over time due to the wear and tear it incurs with each use. The IRS grants annual tax deductions to recover the costs of depreciated equipment over the lifespan of the asset.

As part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, private jet owners were allowed to write off the full value of their private jet purchase in the first year. To qualify for the 100 percent deduction, the jet must be used for “business” purposes at least 50 percent of the time (like visiting my investment advisor in Jackson Hole for two hours and staying two weeks).

However, the 2017 tax break was structured to permanently expire by 2027. The 2025 "Big Beautiful Bill" made this 100 percent bonus depreciation permanent. So, a $40 million private jet purchase is now eligible for deducting the full purchase price in one year. At the 37 percent federal tax rate, your jet deduction is worth $14.8 million in reduced tax obligations.[121]

This is another grotesque taxpayer subsidy designed to goose private jet purchases and activity. Industry groups are bullish on the provision. A Florida-based private aviation company, FlyUSA, stated in an article that they have "seen firsthand how bonus depreciation drives activity. From jet brokers and tax advisors to maintenance shops and insurance underwriters, the whole ecosystem tends to accelerate when these incentives are in play."[122]

POLICY ACTION: Roll Back Accelerated Depreciation. In May 2026, a group of lawmakers introduced simple legislation to repeal the accelerated depreciation provision for private jets. The legislation, H.R. 8644 - Stop Subsidizing Private Jets, was introduced by Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-VA). It effectively eliminates accelerated depreciation for private jet purchases.

POLICY ACTION: Jet Purchase Luxury Tax. The United States is the largest market for private jets in the world. The high dollar volume of global luxury private jet sales represents a lost opportunity for lawmakers interested in raising revenue from the private jet owning oligarchy. A luxury tax of 10 percent on pre-owned private aircraft and a 5 percent on new jets would have yielded $3 billion in tax revenue in 2025 alone and more than $13.5 billion over the last five years. These resources could be allocated into a fund dedicated towards building green transportation infrastructure.

POLICY ACTION: Eliminate Secrecy for Private Jet Flyers. To preserve the public interest and public accountability while maintaining the legitimate security of private aircraft passengers, the FAA Reauthorization Act could amend the LADD registry to not allow operators to entirely opt out of public registries, but delay reporting release until well after flights are completed.

POLICY ACTION: Ensure Private Jets Pay Their Real Costs of Using U.S. Airspace. As we've noted, private jet operators fail to pay the real costs of their use of airspace. One way to capture funds and ensure the ultrawealthy are paying their fair share is by hiking the federal fuel tax on private jet fuel. Legislation has been

introduced in both the House and Senate to increase the federal fuel tax, now 22 cents a gallon, to $2 per gallon. The Fueling Alternative Transportation with a Carbon Aviation Tax (FATCAT) Act was introduced in 2023 and 2025 in the Senate **(**S.173) by Senator Ed Markey (D-MA). A House version was introduced by Rep. Nydia Velazquez (NY-D) in 2023.

The legislation would also remove fuel tax exemptions for logging and oil or gas exploration. The revenues collected from this piece of legislation would be directed towards supporting air traffic services, airport infrastructure, air monitoring, and green public transportation.

Stop Building New Private Jet Infrastructure: Don't Lock in Future Emissions.
Just as countries are discouraging the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure—new pipelines, refineries and new exploration—we should stop building new private jet infrastructure.

METHODOLOGY

Travel Emissions Comparisons

- We used CO_2 emission factors published by the EPA, last updated in January 2025.[123] When applicable, values were converted from miles to kilometers.
    - Amtrak data was calculated using values for "Intercity Rail." The NYC to DC corridor uses the emissions factor for "Intercity Rail - Northeast Corridor."
    - Commercial aviation data was calculated using values for "Air Travel," and vary depending on flight length ("Short Haul," "Medium Haul," or "Long Haul").
- Private aviation emissions were estimated using the fleetwide average emissions and average flight distance calculated in Gössling, et al. (2024). The authors determined average emissions of 3,632 kg CO_2 per flight and average great circle distance of 865.7 km per flight. Dividing these values yields an estimated fleetwide rate of 4.2 kg CO_2 per kilometer, which can then be applied to the distance of each private jet corridor. *Note that this approach does not consider differences in aircraft fuel use or the relatively greater intensity of emissions from takeoff and climb on short-haul flights. While commercial aviation emissions factors vary by flight length, the private aviation estimate is a fleetwide average emissions rate.*
- Flight distance was calculated using the Bureau of Transportation Statistics' Inter-Airport Distance calculator or the NBAA Airport Distance Calculator, both of which calculate the great circle distance between two airports.[124]
- Average occupancy of private flights was calculated using a 4.7 passenger average of occupied flights combined with the share of empty leg flights (41 percent), per industry data.[125]

Airport Expansions

To identify projects likely to benefit private aviation, we flagged specific words and phrases used in the project description, specifically:

- "hangar"
- "apron"
- "taxilane"

- “extend runway”
- “strengthen runway”
- “fuel farm”
- “fuel facility”

We did not flag projects at large and medium primary hub airports, which receive 0.25 percent or more of the country’s annual commercial passenger boardings.

The resulting analysis is an estimate only. Some relevant projects may have been excluded, and some projects may benefit airport users beyond private jet users. Additionally, some FAA grants cover multiple airports or bundle multiple projects together. The analysis treats each grant award as a single grant and flags an award if the project description contains a flagged word or phrase. Because the FAA data don’t break down the amount of funding by each individual project, the full value of the grant award is included in the total award estimate. Therefore, the dollar total should be understood as the full value of grants that include flagged projects, and not the amount specifically spent on such projects.

ABOUT THE IPS PRIVATE JET ACCOUNTABLITY PROJECT

Since 2007, the IPS Program on Inequality has researched the economic and ecological costs of private jets as the rest of us subsidize this indefensible form of transport. In 2026, we formally launched the IPS Private Jet Accountability Project to:

- Eliminate federal and state tax breaks for private jet travel;
- Make private jet users pay the real costs of their behavior, including airport fees and the real environmental impact of their carbon pollution
- Stop the taxpayer subsidized expansion of private jet facilities at local airports

In the United States, the private jet lobby is very powerful. The National Business Aviation Association and their state affiliates represent the interests of private jet owners, operators, and manufacturers. They have won massive tax breaks for jet owners and blocked popular efforts to require private jets to pay their fair share. They lobbied to allow private jet operators to “opt out” of public air travel registries

and maintain secrecy for private jet users. This has made our research more difficult.

Across the U.S. at local airports—some which have no commercial aviation—taxpayer dollars are flowing to expand private jet hangers, runways, and infrastructure. For example, Hanscom Field outside Boston—the biggest private jet airport in New England—has seen a proposed private jet hanger expansion opposed by a massive grassroots campaign. We are now working with coalitions around the country to fight private jet airport expansions.

To serve this movement, we have launched the **Private Jet Emissions Tracker**, a new tool to track private jet emissions, especially connecting to large events where the planet's wealthiest people converge. We piloted the tracker for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, releasing an analysis of private jet traffic and excess emissions for the sporting event.

The "Tracker" is an open-source *sousveillance* (surveillance from below) software that enables the public to measure jumps in private jet-travel associated with any event, like Masters Golf tournament, Kentucky Derby horse-raising, Davos, Super Bowl. We worked to create the system with artist and programmer Kyle McDonald who created the "Apocalypse Early Warning System."

The Tracker will eventually be an open-source program that will enable anyone to measure jumps in private jet-travel associated with an event or track the behavior of individual jet operators to hold them accountable. Stay tuned as we build a global movement to rein in private jet excess.

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