

In response to the question on charging more to use high capacity airports at peak times: I feel there needs to be limits on the numbers of flights allowed to take off and land at airports, like LAX or EWR, that lack adequate runway and gate resources to meet demand. Like London Heathrow (LHR), slots need to be assigned, fairly, to airlines. This helps to assure that capacity controls are not exceeded. It also helps keep the airport on time. The wasting of take off and landing slots at airports like BOS, EWR, and LAX by small commuter aircraft only increases the problem. One slot may be a heavy aircraft with 200+ passengers, followed by a 12-passenger commuter plane.

As well, in the case of LAX and SNA, nearby Long Beach Airport (LGB) with its 10,000+ foot runway has 10 commercial flights a day, total. The airport is 60 seconds off of the major I-405 in southern Los Angeles County. The airport has the space to grow, as well as an excellent location that could take pressure off of LAX and SNA. As of now, flights depart and originate from PHX on HP and DFW on AA. JetBlue begins JFK and IAD service in the fall of 2001.

It's hard to understand why airports like LAX and SNA struggle when there sits, already built and operating, a viable alternative that could quickly begin to relieve pressure.

If prices to fly out of Burbank, Ontario, or Long Beach were close to, or the same as flying out of LAX or SNA to hub airports such as DEN (UA & F9), SLC (DL), Phoenix (HP), Dallas-Fort Worth (AA), or Houston (CO), many people would take advantage of using less crowded, closer to home regional airports.

Right now, in many cases, the lowest price is almost always LAX. This forces people to LAX, even when it is not the best choice for them based on their proximity to LAX. Internet specials, on the major carriers, usually only include LAX in the Southern California market.

Incentives to use LGB, ONT, and other airports need to be made. Lower landing fees, tax incentives, reduced or waived overnight parking fees (for aircraft), and reduced gate charges are just some of the ways to entice a major carrier to a smaller regional airport.

Penalizing the passengers is not the end all answer to reducing congestion. As the number of passengers continues to grow each and every year, cities like Newark, Chicago, and Los Angeles are showing us that they are not taking the lead in airport construction and improvements. Denver and Detroit have made plans and executed them into reality.

We can't wait much longer to fix the problems or they are going to become too large to fix.