

# WHAT DOES CONGESTION COST US?

Congestion has several effects on travelers, businesses, agencies and cities. One significant element is the value of the additional time and wasted fuel. The top 15 urban areas include about 58% of the delay estimated for 2010, and the top 20 areas account for over 65 percent of annual delay. Some other highlights include:

- In 2010, congestion (based on wasted time and fuel) cost about \$115 billion in the 439 urban areas, compared to \$113 billion (in constant dollars) in 2006. (See Exhibits B-7 and B-8).
- The average cost per auto commuter in the 439 urban areas was \$713 in 2010, down from \$723 in 2009 (using constant dollars). The cost ranged from an average of \$1,083 per auto commuter in Very Large urban areas down to \$363 per auto commuter in the Small areas.
- Exhibits B-9 and B-10 show that 1.9 billion gallons of fuel were wasted in the 439 urban areas. This amount of fuel would fill 38 super-tankers or 210,000 gasoline tank trucks.
- The urban areas with populations greater than 3 million accounted for 1.6 billion gallons (about 70% of the national estimate) of wasted fuel.
- The amount of wasted fuel per auto commuter ranges from 25 gallons per year in the Very Large urban areas to 3 gallons per year in the Small areas.

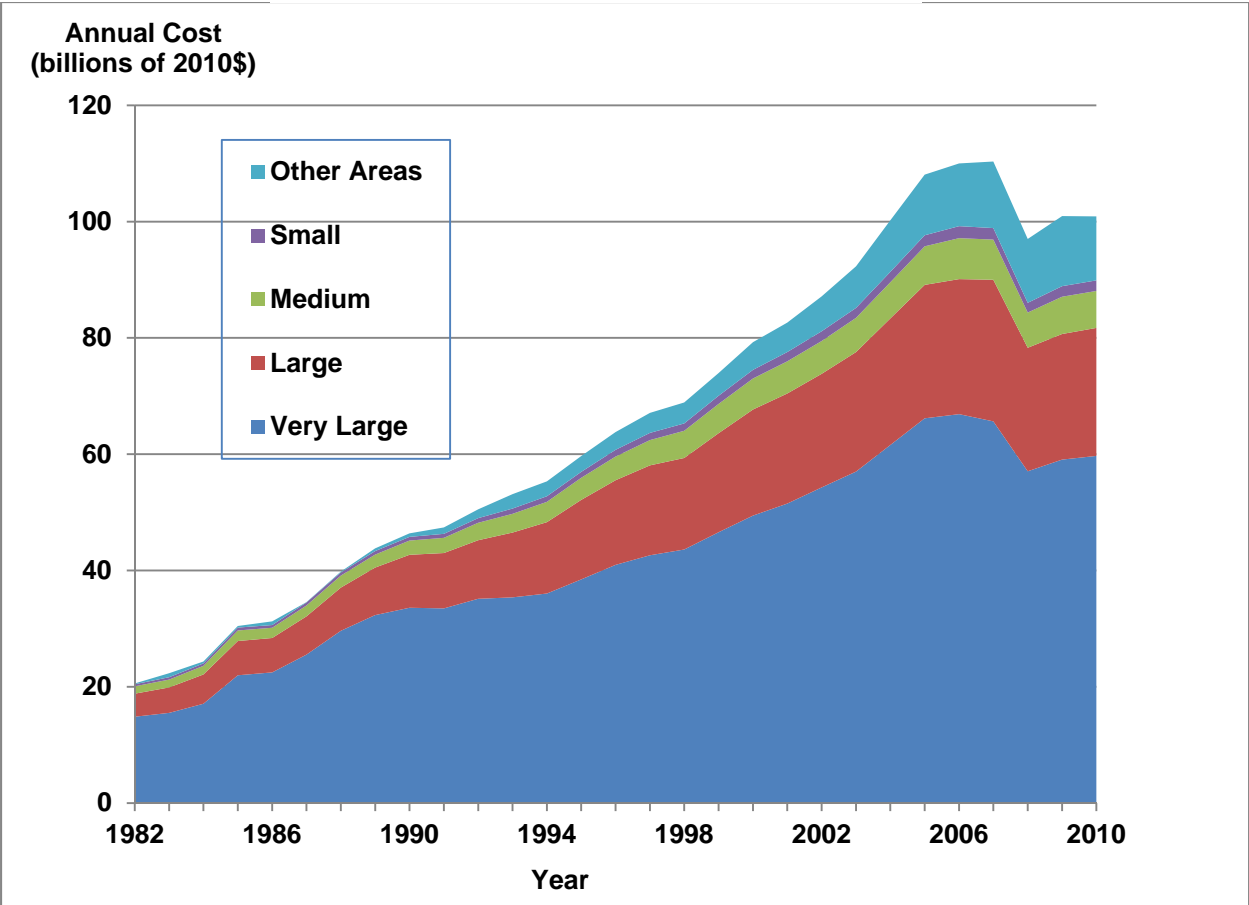
## Exhibit B-7. Congestion Effects on the Average Commuter – 2010

Population Group	<i>Congestion Statistics per Auto Commuter</i>		
	Average Cost (\$)	Average Delay (hours)	Average Fuel (gallons)
Very Large areas	1083	52	25
Large areas	642	31	11
Medium areas	426	21	5
Small areas	363	18	4
Other Urban Areas	327	16	3
439 Area Average	713	34	14
439 Area Total	\$100.9 billion	4.8 billion	1.9 billion

**What is the Total Cost of Congestion?**

The total cost of congestion for each population size group is shown in Exhibit B-8. This cost accounts for the amount of wasted time and fuel due to traffic congestion. The total cost of congestion in the urban areas is \$100.9 billion in 2010 or an average of \$713 per auto commuter.

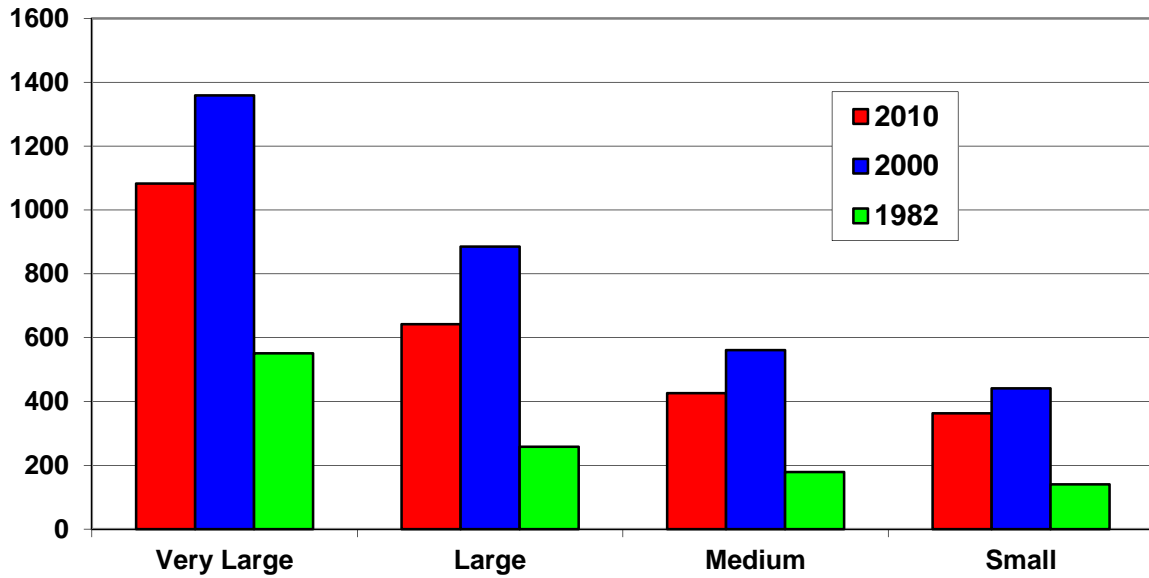
**Exhibit B-8. Annual Cost of Congestion**



- Twenty-one urban areas had a total annual congestion cost of at least \$1 billion each.
- The areas with populations over 3 million persons account for about 59 percent of the congestion cost.

### Exhibit B-9. Annual Cost of Congestion per Auto Commuter

Cost per Auto Commuter  
(constant 2010\$)



#### What is the cost of congestion for me?

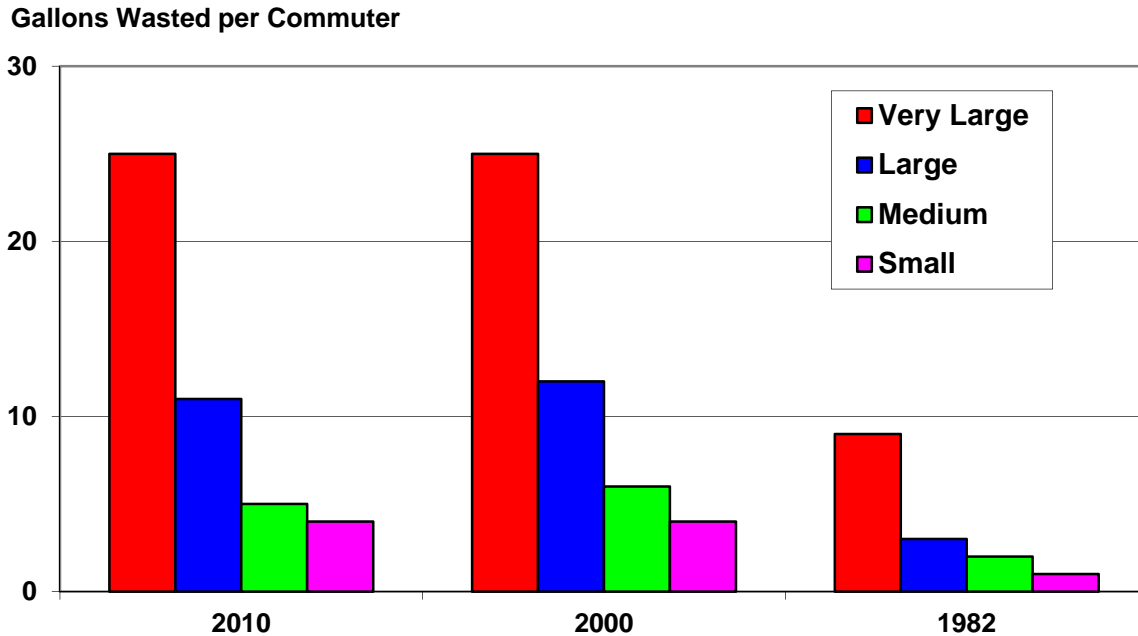
The total cost of congestion is divided by the number of peak period travelers to determine the effect of congestion on an individual (Exhibit B-9). The average annual cost to each of these travelers in the 439 urban areas is about \$713.

- Commuters of 96 areas are “paying” more than \$1 per workday in congestion costs; 59 areas have a congestion value exceeding \$2 per workday.
- The average cost of congestion per auto commuter ranged from \$1,083 in the Very Large population group to \$363 in the Small population group in 2010.

## How Much Fuel is Wasted in Congestion?

As with cost, the amount of fuel wasted in congestion is divided by the estimated number of commuters in the urban area. This provides an estimate of the amount of fuel consumed for each individual because of congestion (Exhibit B-10), a quantity that can be compared to other per capita consumptions. More than 14 gallons are wasted per auto commuter in the 439 urban areas.

**Exhibit B-10. Wasted Fuel per Traveler**



- The amount of wasted fuel per traveler ranged from 4 gallons in the Small population group to 25 gallons in the Very Large population group in 2010.
- The total amount of wasted fuel in the 439 urban areas was approximately 1.9 billion gallons in 2010.