

National Association of Regional Councils



2006 NARC Policy Brief

NARC policies are developed yearly from consultations with and information provided by the association's working groups, committees and its membership. The policies provide a context for NARC's national agenda on significant national and legislative issues. Each policy brief includes a rationale for NARC's position on topics relevant and important to America's regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations, metro and rural, large and small.

Congestion

Issue: Congestion

Background: An overarching goal of NARC's transportation and economic policy is to lessen congestion on our freeways, transit systems, ports, rail yards, and airports. Congestion costs our nation billions of dollars in wasted fuel and lost productivity. NARC sees the application of better transportation planning and enhanced funding as key to helping relieve our congestion burden.

According to the Texas Transportation Institute, congestion has increased at a relatively consistent rate for more than two decades. Congestion is experienced in more places on the transportation system, and a greater proportion of the trip length. The average annual delay for a person using motorized travel during peak periods climbed to 47 hours in 2003—nearly 2 days of every year stuck in congestion! Congestion is an economic problem as well, costing about \$62 billion each year. This cost comes from 3.7 billion hours wasted and 2.3 billion gallons of extra fuel consumed.

Policy Recommendations:

- NARC will seek innovative solutions to congestion problems including road design innovations, distributive cost pricing, and modal shift policies.
- Congestion will be addressed on modes other than highways. Rail and aviation congestion threatens the ability of those modes to carry long distance freight and passengers. Policy changes that ease congestion on these modes will be explored and supported.

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