

# Capital Access Alliance Continues Misleading Data on DCA Capacity

As the Capital Access Alliance continues their reckless efforts to add flights to DCA, CPARA lays out the facts: DCA is at capacity.

The Delta-backed Capital Access Alliance (CAA) continues to make misleading claims and recklessly push for more flights at DCA despite opposition from aviation experts, the local airport authority, and hundreds of other businesses, airports, and local officials. Let's set the record straight and correct the false and misleading claims CAA is using to recklessly push for more flights at DCA. Get the facts below.



## **FACT CHECK #1:** DCA is at capacity and is already home to America's busiest commercial runway.

- DCA tops the list of America's 10 busiest commercial runways, servicing 819 daily scheduled operations.
- The runner-up services only 781 on a runway that is nearly twice as long.

- Importantly, the FAA analyzed Delta-backed claims that DCA can handle additional flights, and found that its analysis "is flawed and does not directly tie to the physical airport capacity."
- The FAA also found that the additional flights proposed by Delta would "have a negative impact on operational performance and passenger experience."



## **FACT CHECK #2:** DCA ranks third in the nation for runway incursions.

- DCA ranks third among America's 30 largest airports for runway incursions, or the presence of an unauthorized aircraft, vehicle, or person on its runways – presenting clear safety issues.
- These incursions are unsurprising given DCA's limited capacity – it serves roughly as many passengers as Dulles International Airport (IAD) on a fraction of the land and runway space.



## **FACT CHECK #5:** MWAA, the local airport authority and expert, agrees that DCA is at capacity.

- The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) was created by Congress to operate DCA and has the expertise to operate DCA safely.
- Jack Potter, CEO of MWAA, has said, "DCA operates at full capacity...Adding more flights to this already-packed schedule would lead to more delays, which would result from the need to accommodate the spacing between aircraft operations that is required to assure safety. How can anyone credibly say that Washington's smallest airport, with the busiest runway in America, is underutilized?"



## **FACT CHECK #3:** DCA has one of the highest cancellation rates among the 30 largest U.S. airports.

- In 2022, DCA ranked third on a list of non-carrier caused cancellation rates.
- This 2022 ranking is not an anomaly – DCA had one of the nation's top 10 cancellation rates every year since 2012, and was regularly ranked among the top five.



## **FACT CHECK #6:** More flights would not mean lower fares, and D.C.-area airports already offer more lower cost travel options and carrier choice than airports in other major cities.

- Despite Delta-backed claims that more flights would lower fares, the experts have concluded that more flights would only mean more delays, cancellations, and congestion at DCA.
- Already, D.C.-area airports including DCA, IAD, and Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI) offer more lower cost travel options and carrier choice than most cities.
- Fewer travelers from D.C.-area airports are reliant on the largest carriers, and lower cost carriers have grown D.C.-area departures nearly four-fold since 1998.
- Due to this high level of competition, the cost of flying in the D.C. area is around the average amongst large U.S. cities and less expensive than four major Delta hubs, while inflation-adjusted fares from D.C.-area airports declined by more than a third since 1998.



## **FACT CHECK #4:** FAA confirms that DCA is delay-prone, that more flights mean more cancellations, and that Delta-backed analysis is "flawed."

- The FAA has confirmed that, even without the additional flights proposed by Delta, "DCA is more delay prone than other airports" and that more flights would further worsen delays.
- According to the FAA, DCA ranks tenth among the most delayed airports and had the 5th largest number of Ground Delay Programs and Ground Stops in the national airspace system.
- Already, about 20% of departures and 22% of arrivals at DCA experience average delays of 67 minutes.