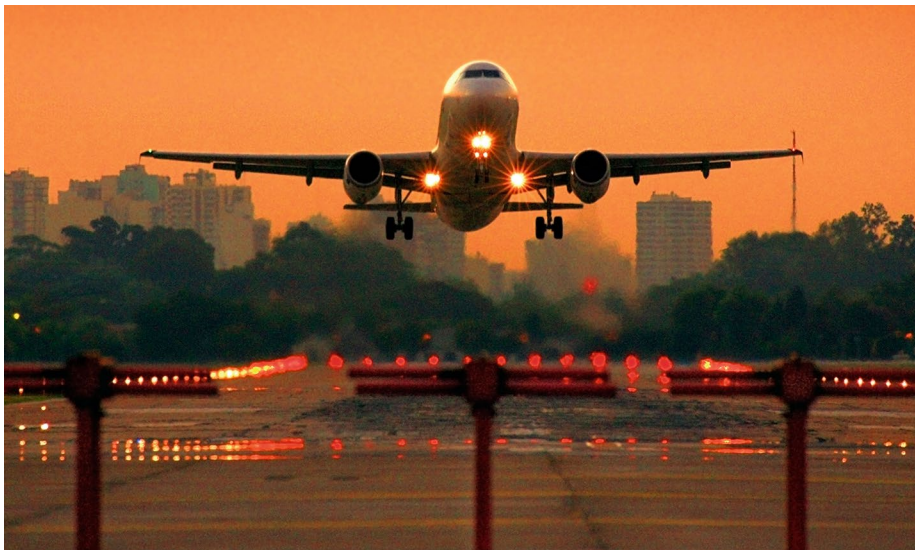


BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS

Nudging carbon pricing

J Environ. Psychol. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2019.101342>



Credit: Bernardo Galmarini / Alamy Stock Photo

A carbon price may be the most effective way for countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Consumer perceptions of how carbon pricing is applied have implications for policy support.

David J. Hardisty of the University of British Columbia and colleagues examined consumer preferences on how carbon pricing regulations are applied to air travel. In three studies with Amazon Mechanical Turk workers, the authors found that participants preferred carbon pricing to be framed as an offset rather than as a tax. They also preferred flights where the carbon price was applied upstream—to offset aviation fuel production and importation—rather than downstream on the consumers themselves for airplane travel and cargo.

Upstream offsets were perceived to be more helpful in mitigating climate change and to hold accountable those primarily responsible for emissions.

As the authors note, the effects sizes are modest and framing carbon prices alone cannot be the only route to consumer acceptance. However, the insights from this study are immediately applicable to the airline industry and, when combined with other measures, framing appears to be a promising tool for strengthening carbon price support.

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Published online: 30 October 2019
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-019-0776-2>