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FUEL EFFICIENCY GAINS: AIRLINES COMPARE FAVORABLY VS OTHER MODES

• This week, IATA hosted the Aviation Fuel Forum and Alternative Fuel Symposium in Singapore where industry professionals gathered to discuss a wide-ranging agenda including fuel efficiency and sustainable aviation fuels. To coincide with these events, today’s chart shows the development in fuel efficiency across three different modes of transportation since 1990.

• The air transport industry will fly 84% more available tonne kilometres in 2018 per gallon of fuel than it did in 1990, which represents a 2.2% improvement in fuel efficiency each year. This sizeable improvement comes partly as a result of technological progress in both engines and aircraft, as well as operational improvements by airlines.

• Putting the achievement of the air transport industry into context, this rate of improvement is more than three times the average increase in car fuel efficiency each year over the period (0.7%) and nine times that for heavy-duty trucks (0.2%).

• Nonetheless, as this week’s events in Singapore confirmed, there is no sense of complacency in the industry in relation to contributing to developing environmental solutions. Globally, the aviation industry produced around 2% of all human-induced carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in 2017. Improving fuel efficiency will remain a key part of the industry’s efforts to reduce its environmental impact, in conjunction with other important initiatives such as supporting the development of sustainable aviation fuels, implementing the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and achieving the ambitious target of halving net aviation CO₂ emissions in 2050 relative to 2005 levels.

Sources: IATA, EIA

*Available tonne kilometres per gallon; **Miles per gallon