Measuring the Benefits of Ride-Hailing Services to Urban Travelers: The Case of the San Francisco Bay Area

by

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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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Abstract:

We estimate the effects of ride-hailing services on the welfare of travelers in the San Francisco Bay Area. Our methodology accounts for travelers’ choice sets including all available modes and constructs a plausible counterfactual of travelers’ welfare with and without the availability of ride-share services. Finally, we measure the benefits from lower fares and improved service. As a conservative estimate, we find that the availability of ride-share services increases travelers’ welfare by at least $1 billion annually. Extrapolating our estimate to all U.S. cities where ride-share services are available suggests aggregate annual benefits are in the multi-billions of dollars.

Bio:

Clifford Winston, the Searle Freedom Trust Senior Fellow in the Brookings Institution’s Economic Studies program, has been with Brookings since 1984. He is an applied microeconomist who specializes in the analysis of industrial organization, regulation, and transportation.

Winston has also been co-editor of the annual microeconomics edition of Brookings Papers on Economic Activity. Prior to his fellowship at Brookings, he was an Associate Professor in the Transportation Systems Division of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Department of Civil Engineering.


Dr. Winston received his A.B. in economics from the University of California at Berkeley in 1974, his M.Sc. from the London School of Economics in 1975, and his Ph.D. in economics from U.C. Berkeley in 1979.

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All are welcome!