



Media Release

Demonstrating the power of algae to fuel aviation

GENEVA, 7 January 2009 – Continental Airlines today joins a group of aviation environmental leaders in testing a second-generation biofuel on one of its aircraft. The Boeing 737-800 will take-off from Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport on a two hour test flight fuelled, in part, by a sustainable biofuel derived from algae and jatropha.

The flight is one of a series of trials taking place around the world. Airlines are testing different types of biofuel to determine the viability of using sustainable alternatives to the Jet-A1 (kerosene) fuel currently used by commercial aviation. This is the first test flight to take place in North America and the first to use a twin-engine aircraft.

Paul Steele, Executive Director of the Air Transport Action Group, the only global organisation representing all parts of the commercial air transport sector, said that today's flight was being watched closely by the aviation industry, "We have been looking at a number of potential fuel sources as long-term replacements for today's jet fuel. Algae has been identified as one of the most promising alternatives so we are eager to see how it performs in normal operating conditions.

"We congratulate Continental Airlines on taking this step towards a sustainable future. It is also significant that Continental has worked so closely with partners Boeing, CFM International and Honeywell UOP in carrying out this test. Aviation is setting the standard for cross-industry cooperation projects to reduce our environmental impact. By working together, great things can be achieved."

Today's test flight is using a mix of biofuel made from algae and the jatropha plant, ensuring any potential fuel source provides for the needs of the industry but does not create other environmental impacts. Steele said, "The aviation industry is committed to pursuing sustainable, second-generation biofuel sources such as jatropha and algae, which don't compete with food supplies for land or water."



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In April 2008, a group of aviation industry leaders signed the Aviation Industry Commitment to Action on Climate Change in Geneva, Switzerland. This declaration brought together major players from across the industry – representing airports, airlines, air traffic control organisations and the biggest aircraft and engine manufacturers in the world. Included were Continental Airlines (represented by the International Air Transport Association), Boeing, CFM International and the Houston Airport System.

Paul Steele remarked, “The declaration signed last year in Geneva set the scene for action at a global level to combat aviation’s climate change impact. Although our industry represents just two percent of world manmade CO2 emissions, industry leaders have recognised that all parts of the economy have to play their part in reducing environmental impact.

“Today, with this test flight in Houston, we are one step closer to achieving our goal of carbon neutral growth for aviation.”

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Notes for media:

- The Air Transport Action Group is the only aviation industry body that comprises the whole commercial air transport sector and counts among its members the large aircraft and engine manufacturers as well as the global associations representing airlines, airports and air traffic control organisations. Its mandate shifts to encompass the pressing needs of the sector, with a focus on ensuring the future growth of air transport is sustainable and highlighting the economic benefits that aviation brings to society. Currently, it is ensuring the industry has a coordinated approach to tackling its climate change impacts.
- Images of the Geneva Declaration signing are available, as well as screen grabs and graphic elements from the website.
- A copy of the Aviation Industry Commitment to Action on Climate Change can be found at: <http://www.enviro.aero/Aviationindustryenvironmentaldeclaration.aspx>
- A web resource has been established about the biofuel trials occurring around the world: www.enviro.aero/biofuels.aspx
- The next global Aviation & Environment Summit will take place in Geneva on 31 March and 1 April 2009. Further details can be found through www.enviro.aero/summit. Media information can be obtained through the contact details below.
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