

# AIRLINES SET FOR FIRST BIOFUEL-POWERED COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS IN U.S.



It is a big week for both the biofuels and aviation industries in the U.S. as two airlines will make the first commercial flights powered by biofuels (or biofuel blends) in the United States.

On Monday, United Airlines will make the first U.S. commercial flight using an "advanced biofuel," a 40-60 blend of algae-based biofuel and traditional petroleum jet fuel made by San Francisco-based Solazyme Inc. And just two days later, Alaska Airlines will fly from Seattle to Washington, D.C. on a 20% biofuel blend.

Although Alaska Airlines seems to have been edged out by United in the race to be the first commercial airline in the U.S. to use biofuel, the scale of their achievement still bests that of United: Alaska's flight on Wednesday will be the first of 75 regularly scheduled biofuel-powered commercial flights in the United States. In other words, Alaska's effort is more than a demonstration. It is an effort to make biofuels a regular part of the fuel mix.

"[S]ustainable biofuels are key to aviation's future," Alaska Air Group Chairman and CEO Bill Ayer said.

"They will enable us to fly cleaner, foster job growth in a new industry, and can insulate airlines from the volatile price swings of conventional fuel to help make air travel more economical," said Ayer.

Both the United and Alaska flights will be made on Boeing aircraft.

"Aviation clearly needs a clean energy alternative to fossil fuels," said Boeing Commercial Airplanes Vice President of Environment and Aviation Policy Billy Glover. "In the U.S. and around the world, the industry is doing all it can to support sustainable biofuel development and maintain aviation's role in global economic growth"

Glover called on the government to enact supportive policies "that encourage investment in the early stages of this emerging sector."

Alaska and United join a growing list of commercial airlines and biofuel companies vying to become the first companies to utilize aviation biofuels at a large, sustained scale.

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