Boeing to Offer up to 330-Minute ETOPS on 777

Allows more direct flights, burns less fuel, emits less carbon dioxide into atmosphere

EVERETT, Wash., Dec. 12, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Boeing (NYSE: BA) announced today it has received type-design approval from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for up to 330-minute extended operations (ETOPS) for its 777 fleet.

The authorization allows 777 customers who purchase or already operate 777-300ER (extended range), 777-200LR (longer range), 777 Freighter and 777-200ER models equipped with General Electric engines to fly up to 330 minutes from an alternate airport. FAA approval for the 777-200ER equipped with Rolls-Royce and Pratt & Whitney engines is expected to follow over the next few months.

"Boeing twin-engine jets have flown more than 7 million ETOPS flights since 1985, and more than 120 Boeing operators fly more than 50,000 ETOPS flights each month," said Larry Loftis, vice president and general manager 777 program. "This is the logical continuation of the Boeing philosophy of point-to-point service. Passengers want to minimize their overall travel time. This is one more step in that direction."

The first airline to purchase the new longer ETOPS option is Air New Zealand. Air New Zealand completed the first 240 ETOPS flight earlier this month from Los Angeles to Auckland, N.Z.

"What this means is that the airplane is able to fly a straighter route between the city pairs and that's good for the environment," said Capt. David Morgan, chief pilot for Air New Zealand. "Less fuel is burned and less carbon dioxide is emitted into the atmosphere. It's also good for customers because flights are potentially shorter and passengers could arrive sooner at their destinations."

The new FAA approval allows airlines that operate routes in the south Pacific, over the North Pole, and from Australia to South America and southern Africa to fly the most direct routes.

An increasing number of operators already are providing ETOPS service to their passengers. For example, 93 percent of 777, 50 percent of 767 and 33 percent of 757 operators fly ETOPS routes. Two-engine ETOPS routes are more than 60 minutes from an alternate airport.

The 777 fleet has flown more than 2 million ETOPS flights since its debut in June 1995. Fifty-three 777 operators fly more than 22,000 ETOPS flights per month.

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