Boeing Begins Certification Testing on 747-8 Performance Improvements

Performance package improves fuel burn by another 1.8 percent

EVERETT, Wash., May 21, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- A Boeing (NYSE: BA) 747-8 Intercontinental successfully completed its first test flight this week with a package of performance improvements including enhanced GE engines. This package is designed to improve the fuel efficiency of the popular jetliner.

With Boeing Flight Test and Evaluation Capt. Kirk Vining and Chief Pilot Capt. Mark Feuerstein at the controls, the airplane took off from Paine Field in Everett, Wash. at 1:30 p.m. local time and landed at Boeing Field in Seattle approximately four hours later.

"It was a great flight and the engines performed as expected," said Capt. Vining. "This is an important milestone for the flight test program."

The airplane Performance Improvement Package (PIP) includes improvements to the GEnx-2B engines and Flight Management Computer (FMC) software.

Boeing's continuous efforts to improve the 747-8 family have resulted in an accumulated 1.5 percent gain in fuel efficiency since the first airplane was delivered less than two years ago. These new improvements will give operators an airplane that is an additional 1.8 percent more efficient.

"These improvements are a part of our commitment to continually improve our great airplanes for our customers," said Eric Lindblad, vice president and general manager of the 747 program. "Improving fuel efficiency by another 1.8 percent saves the airlines approximately one million dollars per year in fuel per airplane and reduces the carbon footprint."

The test program will also validate the design changes and demonstrate the operation of the horizontal tank fuel system on the passenger version of the 747-8, which was deferred from the initial deliveries. The new configuration will first deliver in early 2014 and be available for retrofit. Entry into service of the new engines and FMC software will take place in late 2013.

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