



Harbour Air is North America's largest seaplane airline | Photo source Harbour Air

PLANS FOR WORLD'S FIRST ALL-ELECTRIC SEAPLANE FLEET

  MOBILITY & TRANSPORT

An airline and an electric aviation company have teamed up to convert a seaplane fleet to electricity

Spotted: Electric aviation company magniX and Harbour Air, North America's largest seaplane airline, have teamed up to develop an all-electric seaplane fleet.

Harbour Air currently flies 12 scheduled routes, but most of those routes are quick hops of under 100 miles between Seattle or Vancouver and nearby islands and cities. That makes the airline a great candidate for conversion to run on the first generation of electric aviation motors. The new planes will be powered by the magni500, a 750 horsepower (HP) all-electric motor.

The first aircraft to be converted will be the DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver, a six-passenger seaplane. The engine will give the Beaver a maximum flight time of 1 hour, long enough for many of Harbour's routes. Harbour Air hopes to eventually convert all 42 of its seaplanes to run on electricity. The first test flights are planned to take place in late 2019.

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Takeaway:

The concept of electric aircraft is not new, but despite plans for an electric passenger plane and a flying car they have yet to really take off. This may be due to the fact that the first generation

of electric aviation motors have a limited range. Meanwhile, aviation is a major source of carbon emissions, accounting for almost 5 percent of all global carbon emissions. MagniX hopes that future electric aviation engines will be a viable and sustainable option for the 75 percent of airline flights that are under 1,000 miles in range. In addition to being more sustainable than petrol, the electric engines offer a substantial financial savings, costing around €11 per hour to operate.