

FAA adopts ICAO 2027 emissions, noise rules; death knell for new production 767F, 777F

Prospect of a 787F or New Midmarket Airplane freighter to replace 767F emerges at Boeing

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA, USA, June 16, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The US Federal Aviation Administration yesterday announced it will adopt the emissions and noise rules proposed in 2017 to reduce emissions and noise in commercial jets and turboprops by 2027. Failure to comply means the offending airplanes can't be produced from 2028. The rules won't affect airplanes already produced.



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The FAA's move means that Boeing's popular 767-300ERF and 777-200LRF can't be produced from 2028.

The rules were adopted by the global organization ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization. But countries individually must adopt them. The FAA proposes a new

rule to bring the US into compliance. By federal law, the FAA proposed rule must be published in the Federal Register. A comment period follows, after which the FAA either moves forward with the rule as proposed, revises it, or rejects its proposed rule based on the comments.

Boeing already announced a successor to the 777F: the 777-8F, a member of the 777X family. Entry-into-service is slated for mid-2027 before the rules take effect. Boeing doesn't have a solution for the termination of the 767F production.

Boeing's easiest option

Boeing has some options to pursue for the 767F problem.

Seek an Exemption: Boeing's first and low- or no-cost solution is to seek an exemption for the 767F. The willingness of the FAA—and the administration of President Biden, which has made greening federal policies a top priority to combat climate change—seems unlikely unless it's a finite “bridge” exemption to a new solution. However, Biden's term runs to January 20, 2023. If he's not reelected in November 2024 (or if a Democrat isn't elected should Biden not run), a new Republican Administration could almost certainly be willing to make an exception.

Re-engine the 767: Boeing has examined this prospect several times and rejected it each time. While technically it's possible, Boeing concluded each time that commercially doing so is infeasible. LNA studied this idea.

After the re-engining of the 737 proved problematic, the changes required for a re-engined 767, and the new regulatory environment add to the technical changes that Boeing would face with a 767RE.

Develop a 787 freighter

The Boeing 787-8 (middle) and Boeing 787-9 (bottom) are possible successors to the Boeing 767-300ERF (top). For now, a 787F is only an idea. Credit: Leeham News.

Develop a 787F: This option was built into the 787 at conception. Boeing initially began discussing the idea with the market a few years ago, but as with so many other things, the MAX crisis and the pandemic sidelined discussions.

However, as the ICAO clock is ticking, the COVID pandemic winds down, and Boeing emerges from the MAX crisis, discussions and studies resumed. Boeing met with cargo operators last month to test the waters about a 787F. It was a fact-finding mission, and no conclusions were reached.

Boeing designed the prospect of a freighter into the 787 (called "protecting" the option) at inception. The forward fuselage systems were routed around the area for a forward cargo door. Converting a 787 into a freighter would be a daunting challenge for after-market companies. But Boeing could launch a new-build factory design. A lot more study and market input are required before a decision is made.

A new airplane

A new airplane design: Boeing could incorporate a freighter option into a new airplane design, such as the Mew Midmarket Airplane (NMA) that Boeing considered for years. Newly appointed CEO David Calhoun killed the NMA upon taking office in January 2020. But market intelligence indicates that Boeing resumed studies for the NMA, as well as a single-aisle aircraft, for its next new airplane. Either design would have at least two family members with 5,000nm and 4,500nm ranges depending on whether the aircraft is 225 or 250 passengers in two classes. The twin-aisle NMA is sized roughly similar to the 767-200 and 767-300. A freighter version of the 250-passenger model would roughly match the 767-300ER. It may be important to a successful business case for the NMA.

Is there an NMA-F prospect?

At a briefing yesterday in advance of the Farnborough Air Show next month, Brian Hermesmeyer, the Senior Director, Freighter Customer Leader, said Boeing is considering its alternatives for the 767F.

“We continue to work with regulators and customers to work within the sustainability framework first to make sure the 767F may have a possibility of continuing,” he said.

“We look at a lot of different things in development and how to make sure we have a good medium widebody solution. Are we looking at different freighter platforms in that space? Absolutely. Is the 787 one of them? That’s a natural place for us to look. But for now, 767s will be delivered through the end of 2027 and we will make sure we have the right airplanes in the right space when the market demands it.”

Hermesmeyer referred to “platforms” as options. But he was coy about what alternatives to the 787 might be a platform.

“We look at a lot of things. That’s about all I can say,” he said. Pressed specifically about the prospect of an NMA-F, Hermesmeyer said, “One of the things we always do is consider cargo in studying a new airplane family. You can be assured there are studies on any and all platforms when it comes to cargo. Whether or not it comes to fruition has everything to do with market dynamics.

“You have to look at it through a market lens,” he added. “You have to look at what the market wants. If the market asks for a freighter derivative in that

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