

NAVY FIGHTER JET TO TEST BIOMASSFUEL DURING EARTH DAY FLIGHT

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A Navy fighter test jet to be flown on April 22 -- Earth Day -- plans to "be the first plane ever to fly faster than the speed of sound on a mix that's half biomass," President Obama announced this morning during an energy security speech at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

"The Army and Marine Corps have been testing this vehicle on a mixture of biofuels. And this Navy fighter jet -- called the Green Hornet -- will be flown for the first time in just a few weeks, on Earth Day," Obama explained as he stood in front of the F-18 jet.

"Now, the Pentagon isn't seeking these alternative fuels just to protect our environment; they are pursuing these homegrown energy sources to protect our national security. Our military leaders recognize the security imperative of increasing the use of alternative fuels, decreasing energy use and reducing our reliance on imported oil," Obama continued. "That's why the Navy, led by Secretary Mabus who is here today, has set a goal of using 50% alternative fuel in all planes, vehicles and ships in the next ten years. And that's why the Defense Department has invested \$2.7 billion this year alone to improve energy efficiency," he added.

According to sources familiar with Obama's announcement, the biofuel that will power the FA-18 will be from camelina produced by Sustainable Oils, a joint venture between Targeted Growth and Green Earth Fuels. The company helped power an Air Force A-10C Thunderbolt II earlier this month that was fueled on a 50/50 blend of camelina-based jet fuel and traditional jet fuel.

"Today, President Obama made it clear that our overall national security is tied to how quickly we can develop domestic energy supplies," said Sustainable Oils CEO Tom Todaro, who was in attendance at the president's speech. "Sustainable Oils is committed to meeting that imperative by working with farmers across America to produce renewable, sustainable and domestic fuel that not only increases our national security, but also reduces emissions and creates jobs and economic opportunity," he added.

Meanwhile, a number of airlines have begun to test the use of biofuel-based jet fuel, including Japan Airlines and Continental Airlines, which teamed up with Boeing and GE Aviation/CFM International and technology developer UOP. Additionally, the International Air Transport Association has called on its members to rely on alternative fuel blends of up to 10% by 2017.

During this morning's speech, Obama also announced a proposal to open up some areas of the Outer Continental Shelf to oil exploration, and reiterated that tomorrow, his administration will finalize the nation's first greenhouse gas emission limits on light-duty vehicles, as well as an increase in fuel economy regulations for model years 2012-2016.

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