

Boeing CEO Commits To Accessibility.



Ossining, New York Jul 31, 2023 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Boeing CEO David Calhoun has given his commitment to the company exploring accessibility for all future-produced commercial aircraft.

The commitment comes in response to an internationally circulating petition calling on Boeing Co and Airbus “to include as quickly as possible and as standard, full accessibility features on all future manufactured and refurbished commercial aircraft”.

Calhoun said “Boeing has a long history of being at the forefront of innovations in aviation to meet the needs of our customers and their passengers. We have an ongoing commitment to explore a variety of interior concepts to create a more accessible flight experience.”

Airline accessibility is becoming a hot topic with various groups lobbying both the US and British Governments to introduce legislation that would force airlines to introduce accessible features, particularly for the mobility disabled.

At present passengers who have mobility issues are lifted on and off aisle chairs and into and out of their seats. There have been many documented cases of passengers being injured during this process, and wheelchairs being damaged when loaded as luggage.

The petition also calls for the provision of toilets onboard that can be accessed by disabled passengers. Last week legislation was mooted that would require all single-aisle aircraft with 125 plus seating to have one accessible bathroom by 2033.

Petition creator Pekka Paavonpera said David Calhoun's commitment was a small but positive step in the right direction.

"We, and I use the term we as this petition is on behalf of the disabled community, have yet to hear from Airbus. Also, the passengers' needs that David talks about have not to date been accessibility - aircraft manufacturers, on the request of airlines, have created more luxury features such as onboard showers, etc, aimed at the fully abled traveler, but nothing yet as far as accessibility. However we do take some comfort in his commitment to explore access concepts," said Paavonpera.

He said the last time any major accessibility feature was introduced was when Franklin D Roosevelt was President and a lift was installed on the then equivalent of Air Force 1, for his journey to Europe to hold talks with Churchill and Stalin.

"It would not have been dignified to manhandle the President on and off aircraft," said Paavonpera

Paavonpera said he aimed the petition at Boeing Co and Airbus as airlines have to date not made accessibility a priority. He said if the airline manufacturers began to make accessibility a standard feature on commercial aircraft, it would bypass the airlines' reluctance and also circumnavigate the "long and laborious" legislative process.

"This has gone on for decades and the time for action is now, he said.

"Of course, there would have to be safety standards but groups such as All Wheels Up have been doing vigorous testing of safety standards that will be required."

"Last week's announcement about airline bathroom requirements doesn't really solve anything, as mobility-disabled passengers will still have to leave their wheelchairs at the gate and use the aisle chairs which are by no means safe."

Paavonpera said the petition will be ongoing so as to show Boeing and Airbus that there is a real need and an urgency for accessibility, and that both should introduce this before being required to do so through legislation.

"We want to show we will not be silenced in our call for aircraft accessibility," said Paavonpera.

The petition is - <https://www.change.org/p/tell-boeing-and-airbus-to-make-air-travel-accessible-for-all>

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