COULSON AVIATION ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF BOEING 767 VLAT PROGRAM

News / Airlines



Coulson Aviation USA announced the launch of its Boeing 767 Very Large Airtanker program, marking a significant advancement in the evolution of aerial firefighting capability. The program is intended to provide a sustainable replacement for legacy VLAT platforms nearing the end of their operational service life. Recent grounding of the MD11 and DC10 fleets has highlighted a structural challenge for firefighting agencies worldwide. As older widebody aircraft are retired, the industry faces a significant reduction in high-capacity, large-scale retardant delivery capability. Coulson's 767 VLAT is being developed to address this gap with an aircraft that offers greater payload, lower fuel burn, and long-term sustainability compared to existing platforms.

Britt Coulson, President and CEO of Coulson Aviation USA commented: "The firefighting community is seeing rapid changes in available airframe types, and agencies need solutions that are safe, efficient, and supportable for decades. The 767 is a proven widebody platform with global support, parts availability, modern systems, and compelling operating economics. Our program builds on those strengths and will deliver performance beyond what legacy VLATs can provide."

Coulson's 767 VLAT will incorporate the largest iteration of their patented RADS retardant delivery system, while retaining the ability to carry over 160 passengers, and delivering a tank capacity that

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exceeds any VLAT currently in operation. The aircraft will be designed with the same multi-mission, all-risk versatility that defines Coulson's airtanker fleet, while offering substantial gains in payload capability, fuel efficiency, and long-term maintainability compared to legacy VLAT platforms. Engineering, structural analysis, and systems integration planning are already underway.

The 767 VLAT will complement and augment Coulson's fleet of Large Airtankers, including the C-130H Hercules and the 737 Fireliner, which together represent the highest-capacity 4,000 gallon LAT solutions operating today. By adding a next-generation very large airtanker to its portfolio, Coulson will provide firefighting agencies with an additional strategic tool when incidents demand sustained, high-volume aerial suppression over extended operational periods.

Coulson Aviation continues to invest ahead of demand, ensuring its partners have access to reliable, effective, and globally supportable aircraft. The Boeing 767 VLAT program represents the next evolution of heavy aerial firefighting capability and reinforces Coulson's leadership in delivering safe, innovative, and mission-ready solutions to the global firefighting community.

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