BOMBARDIER JUST LANDED A HUGE DEAL THAT COULD RESCUE ITS BOEING-CHALLENGING NEW JET

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Bombardier's embattled C-Series airliner has finally found the major North American airline customer it has been searching for.

Air Canada announced Wednesday that it would order 45 CS-300 airliners with an option for another 30 jets.

"We are delighted to announce this important agreement with Bombardier for the purchase of CS-300 aircraft as part of the ongoing modernization of Air Canada's narrowbody fleet," Air Canada president and CEO Calin Rovinescu said in a statement.

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"With its high fuel efficiency performance and greater seating capacity, the next-generation technology of the C Series is very well suited for our current and future network strategy and will be an extremely efficient addition to our fleet."

The 45-plane order is worth as much as $3.7 billion. The option for 30 additional CS-300 aircraft could add as much as $2.5 billion to the deal.

Times have been tough in recent months for the Canadian company's critically acclaimed challenger to Airbus and Boeing.

Though most industry observers say the state-of-the-art airliner is among the best on the market, the C-Series had gone more than a year with an order. So we're not surprised that Canada's national carrier has stepped up to lend a hand; we've reached out to Bombardier and Air Canada for comment.

In the marketplace, the CS-300 competes against Airbus' A319neo and Boeing's 737 Max7.

Until Air Canada signed on, Bombardier had failed to secure a single order from any of North America's leading airlines. Last month, the C-Series lost out to Boeing on a 40-plane order from United Airlines.

The company does have orders from several leading international customers in Swiss International and Korean Air.

The $82 million Bombardier CS-300 features seating for 160 passengers and is powered by two Pratt & Whitney PW1500G engines.

The Canadian airplane maker has been fighting to recover from a tough 2015 in which the company was forced to write down $4.4 billion and take a $1.3 billion bailout.

Bombardier also announced Wednesday that would lay off 7,000 employees over the next two years. According to the CBC. the layoffs will affect the company's commercial aerospace division, which produces the C-Series.

Air Canada will take delivery of its new C-Series fleet in late 2019 to replace the airline's fleet of Embraer E-190 jets.

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