

Solar plane's next leg of global trip—Arizona to Oklahoma

May 12 2016



In this photo provided by Solar Impulse, Bertrand Piccard acknowledges the crowd prior to the takeoff of "Solar Impulse 2," in Goodyear, Ariz., Thursday, May 12, 2016. The solar-powered airplane that landed in Arizona last week is headed to Oklahoma on the latest leg of its around-the-world journey. (Jean Revillard/Solar Impulse via AP)

A solar-powered airplane that landed in Arizona last week is headed to Oklahoma on the latest leg of its around-the-world journey.

The Swiss-made Solar Impulse 2 took off from Phoenix Goodyear Airport about 3 a.m. Thursday with a destination of Tulsa International Airport.

It departed from northern California in the early hours of May 2 and landed at the airport southwest of Phoenix 16 hours later. Last month, it flew from Hawaii to California.

The globe-circling voyage began in March 2015 from Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, and made stops in Oman, Myanmar, China and Japan.

After Oklahoma, the plane is expected to make at least one more stop in the United States before crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Europe or northern Africa, according to the website documenting the journey.

The Solar Impulse 2's wings, which stretch wider than those of a Boeing 747, are equipped with 17,000 solar cells that power propellers and charge batteries. The plane runs on stored energy at night.

Ideal flight speed is about 28 mph, although that can double during the day when the sun's rays are strongest.

The plane had a five-day trip from Japan to Hawaii and three-day trip from Hawaii to California's Silicon Valley.



In this photo provided by Solar Impulse, people gather prior to the takeoff of a solar powered plane, "Solar Impulse 2," in Goodyear, Ariz., Thursday, May 12, 2016. The solar-powered airplane that landed in Arizona last week is headed to Oklahoma on the latest leg of its around-the-world journey. (Jean Revillard/Solar Impulse via AP)

The crew was forced to stay in Oahu, Hawaii, for nine months after the plane's battery system sustained heat damage on its trip from Japan.

Project officials say the layovers give the two Swiss pilots—Bertrand Piccard and Andre Borschberg—a chance to swap places and engage with local communities along the way so they can explain the project, which is estimated to cost more than \$100 million.

The solar project began in 2002 to highlight the importance of renewable energy and the spirit of innovation.

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