

Hyperloop One settles co-founder lawsuit

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Hyperloop One on Friday said it settled a lawsuit filed by a co-founder who accused former colleagues of nepotism, threats and mismanagement at the startup devoted to revolutionizing transport with super-speedy travel.

"Hyperloop One is pleased to announce that it has reached a confidential resolution of litigation with its former employees and looks forward to continuing to execute on its business plan," a spokesman said in an email to AFP.

Co-founder Brogan BamBrogan, who left the company in June, was among others from the startup to file a civil suit in a California state court.

"It became apparent that those in control of the company continually used the work of the team to augment their personal brands, enhance their romantic lives and line their pockets," the lawsuit said.

Orin Snyder, an attorney representing Hyperloop One, responded at the time by calling the lawsuit an "unfortunate and delusional" effort by employees behind a failed coup at the startup.

The case was filed just months after Hyperloop One held its first public test in the desert outside Las Vegas, trying out engine components designed to zip pods that carry people or cargo through tubes at speeds of 700 miles (1,125 kilometers) per hour or more.

The company hopes to realize a futuristic vision for transportation at near-supersonic speeds laid out three years ago by billionaire Elon Musk, the entrepreneur behind electric car company Tesla and private space exploration endeavor Space X.

"Lawsuits can be distracting for companies; they often halt momentum until they can be resolved," Hyperloop One chief executive Rob Lloyd said in a staff memo, a copy of which was obtained by AFP.

"That didn't happen here."

Dubai this month said it is collaborating with Hyperloop One to look into the feasibility of constructing a near-supersonic transport link that could slash travel times to Emirati capital Abu Dhabi to minutes.

The deal will see both parties explore a route for a vacuum-sealed pod transportation system, which could potentially cut travel between Dubai and Abu Dhabi—90 miles (150 kilometers) apart—to around 12 minutes.

The startup says the system offers better safety than passenger jets, lower build and maintenance costs than high-speed trains, and energy usage, per person, that is similar to a bicycle.

Last month, port colossus DP World Group of Dubai announced it was investing in the concept, joining backers including French national rail company SNCF, US industrial conglomerate General Electric and Russian state fund RDIF.

Hyperloop One has so far raised more than \$160 million (145 million euros).

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