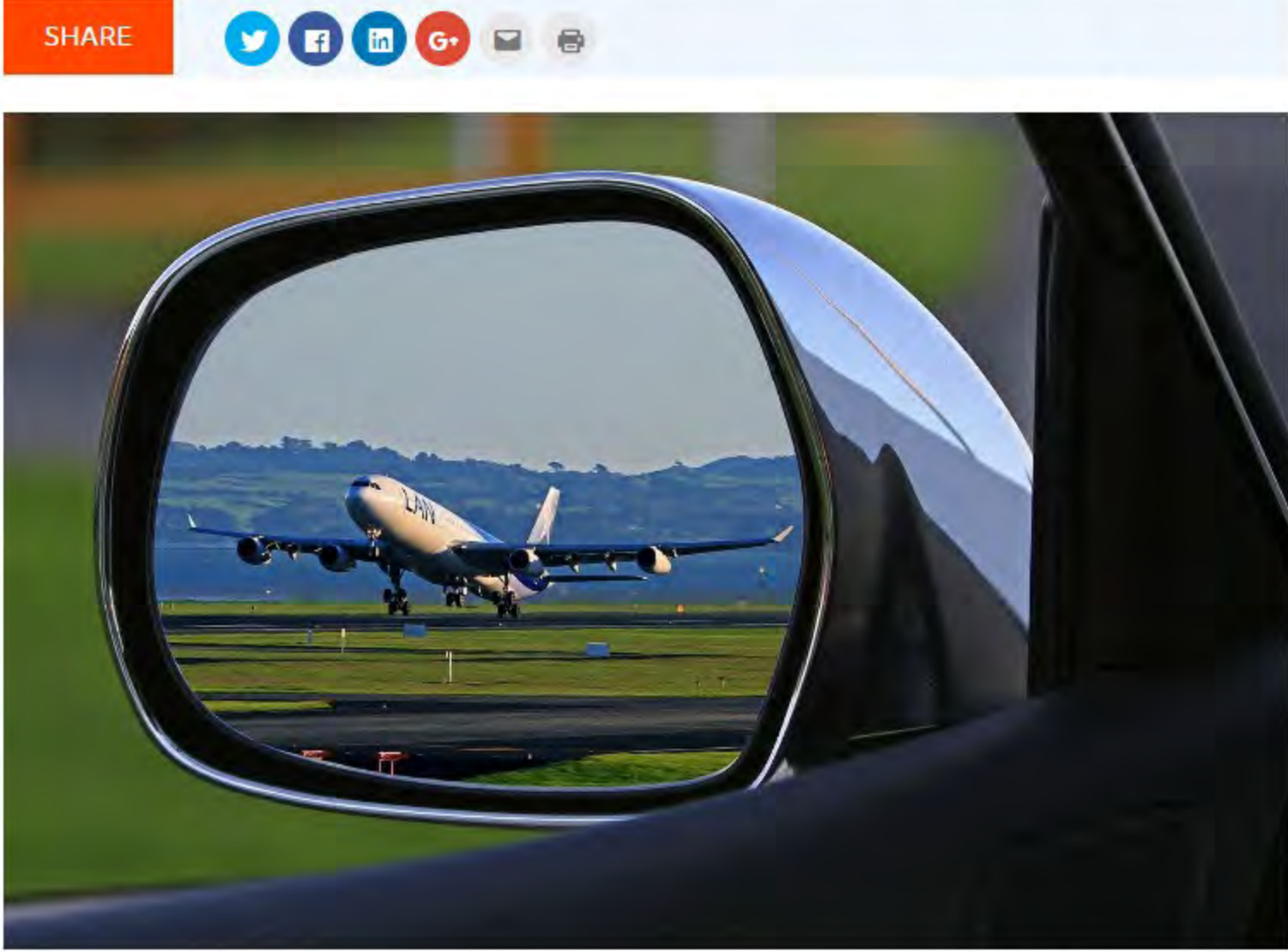




Airlines to Test Alternative Fuel

by Anum Yoon on Wednesday, Oct 12th, 2016 TRANSPORTATION



As the world turns its attention to addressing global warming, the airline industry, too, is researching ways to do its part and lower greenhouse gas emissions. One option is investing more into the development and integration of alternative fuels. Biofuels made from vegetable oil, corn and even household garbage are all very real possibilities.

Air travel is one of the largest contributors to environmental pollution. Traditional jet fuel contains a combination of various pollutants, like nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide. This noxious combination is what creates the greenhouse effect that harms our atmosphere.

The aviation industry knows it is a large part of the problem where climate change is concerned, and it's already working on a transition to alternative fuels. The technology already exists. But manufacturers haven't been able to produce the necessary quantities for widespread use.

Where the industry is now

Airlines like Virgin and JetBlue have already begun to integrate eco-friendly fuels into their fleet of aircraft, but they're limited in terms of how frequently these substitutes for traditional jet fuel can be used. To put it in context, [JetBlue just put in an order of 330 million gallons of renewable fuel](#). Only 100 million gallons are produced annually, and despite JetBlue's record-breaking request, the need in the aviation industry numbers in the billions of gallons.

There's clearly progress that must be made on the production side of things if all airlines are to transition to more eco-friendly energy options.

But this is proving difficult, considering that investment in aviation biofuels is on the decline — even though the overall consumption of fossil fuels in the U.S. has dropped from [85.7 BTUs in 2005 to 80.4 BTUs in 2014](#) — and should continue to do so in the future.

What the future holds

Both in the United States and in other parts of the world, companies have vowed, with the help of their governments, to make better efforts to conquer the issues facing sustainable aviation. The recent [U.N. accord agreed upon by 191 nations](#) sparked much of this action, and there is hope that it will also create a greater demand for biofuels in the near future.

The U.K., for example, laid out plans that will take the country up to the year 2050, with the overall goal being to bring CO2 emissions back down to 2005 levels. By the year 2020, the U.K. hopes to have made more progress in waste gas capture, which Virgin already tried in Shanghai. In the U.S., the Federal Aviation Administration is working to grow production of alternative jet fuels, and hopes to have [1 billion gallons of drop-in fuels from renewable sources by 2018](#).

As a large contributor to global CO2 emissions, it should be obvious that these types of positive moves the airline industry must continue to employ at a rapid clip. It isn't enough to give it a try and hope for the best. If nothing substantial is done to curb emissions and make the transition toward more sustainable methods of fueling aircraft, [today's numbers are expected to triple by 2050](#).

The future isn't a bleak one, though. The pledges made by countries across the globe in the recent U.N. accord show [a collective commitment to conquer this problem](#). JetBlue's recent order of sustainable fuel is most likely to be the first of many similar orders in the coming years as airline companies, governments, and other private technological industries work together to overcome obstacles in renewable energies and biofuels.

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Anum Yoon is a writer who is passionate about personal finance and sustainability. She often looks for ways she can incorporate money management with environmental awareness. You can read her updates on [Twitter](#) Follow Anum Yoon @anumyoon

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