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Report: Boeing could move 787 operations from Everett to South Carolina

A decision on the relocation could come as soon as next month, but Reuters quoted sources saying the decision is all but made.

Snohomish County launches 'Better With Boeing' campaign

Author: [Glenn Farley](#)
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EVERETT, Wash. — These are nervous times in Everett and Snohomish County as Boeing continues to study whether to consolidate and move its 787 production line from Everett to North Charleston, South Carolina.

"We're keeping positive, just focusing on our strengths," said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. "We need to scramble to see what we can do locally to make the case that it's a good place to do business."



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Somers said the county is taking part in a two-track effort to try and convince Boeing to keep the 787 assembly line in Everett and position its Everett factory for the next jet program. One of those tracks is public outreach on social media to remind Boeing and its workforce that they are part of the Snohomish County family, according to Somers. That initiative is called the ["Better With Boeing"](#) campaign.

The other track is maintaining a dialog with Boeing executives and reminding them that Boeing, along with its workforce in Washington state and Snohomish County, is the best in the business of aerospace.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has upended Boeing as it has upended its airline customers.

Although domestic U.S. flying has rebounded somewhat, international flights remain near record low modern-day levels. Most of the bigger twin-aisle jets built by Boeing in Everett are destined for that international travel market, including many 787s.

"It makes some sense to go to Charleston," says analyst Michel Merluzeau of Air Insight Research. "That said, I see a continuing role for Everett in supporting the 787."

Merluzeau said that may involve such work as installing interiors in jets that are largely assembled in North Charleston.

While Boeing framed its study as consolidating its assembly lines in one place, North Charleston was already the center of gravity for the 787 Dreamliner program.

The 787-10, the longest version of the Dreamliner, is only made in North Charleston. As the modified 747-Dreamlifter is limited in the size of parts, it can fly to Everett for assembly.



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A decision on the relocation could come as soon as next month, but [Reuters quoted sources](#) saying the decision to move the Everett assembly line to Charleston is all but determined.

Boeing refutes that, saying no decision has yet been reached.

"We are engaging with our stakeholders, including the unions, as we conduct this study. We will take into account a number of factors and keep an eye on future requirements as we think of the long term health of our production system. Boeing remains committed to Washington state and South Carolina," the company said in a statement.

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'Recipe for disaster': Widow of 737 MAX passenger reacts to Congressional Boeing report

Brittney Riffel's husband, Melvin, and his brother, Bennett, were on Ethiopia Airlines Flight 302, the second crash of a new Boeing 737 MAX.



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Author: Glenn Farley

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In late 2018, a brand new 737 MAX went down in Indonesia.

At first it seemed like a crash out of the blue.

Then just five months later in March 2019, another brand new MAX plunged into the ground after take-off in Ethiopia in March.

On board the second jet was Melvin Riffel, and his brother Bennett.

The trip was part of a last big travel adventure.

Mel's wife Brittney was home, pregnant, in Redding, California.

"His parents both showed up at my door, around 8:30 in the morning on a Sunday," Brittney Riffel said. "I opened the door and I just knew."

Brittney Riffel has learned a lot about pilots struggling to control an airplane that seemed to have a mind of its own.

"It's a recipe for disaster, I don't know how humans could respond in that situation," she said.

Immediately after the Ethiopian crash, countries started grounding the 737 MAX, including the United States on March 13, 2019.

In more than a year's worth of hearings the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, led in part by Rep Rick Larsen of Everett investigated.

The crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia are blamed on a piece of software used on the MAX called MCAS. It's designed to automatically help pilots control the plane's pitch.

But it's blamed in the accidents for repeatedly forcing the nose down, resulting in a loss of control. The pilots had no training in how to deal with such a situation.

The committee's report faults Boeing for a culture of concealment. In several critical instances, Boeing withheld crucial information from the FAA, Boeing's customers and 737 MAX pilots.

The report said Boeing's own tests showed that pilots could end up in a terrible situation.

"In November 2012, for instance, it took a Boeing test pilot more than 10 seconds to respond to uncommanded MCAS activation during a flight simulator test, a condition the pilot found to be 'Catastrophic.'"

The FAA guidance is that a pilot should have been able to respond in four seconds.

"You add all of that up, and you shake your fists, and you shake your head. And wonder how this could all happen, and have the plane be considered compliant with the rules," Larsen said.

"We now know that compliance with rules doesn't necessarily mean the plane's going to be safe."

For Brittney Riffel, so much has changed since that March day.

"We have lost so much, and the way that everything has unraveled, is tormenting," she said.

"And no family, and no individual, should have to go through the pain and suffering we're all going through and it could have been prevented."

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