

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Silver Airways, Owner Of Seaborne Airlines, Can't Fly New Planes Because Of Gov't Shutdown

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Silver Airways, which [acquired Seaborne Airlines in April 2018](#), was set to introduce a new set of airplanes to its line of aircrafts next month. However, the carrier is unable to do so because of the federal government shutdown, according to U.S. mainland news reports confirmed by Seaborne to The Consortium.

Silver Airways was on track to be the first U.S. airline to fly the ATR 42-600, an aircraft manufactured in France, and it was scheduled to start operating the plane in February. Silver Airways is a modest operation with a fleet of 21 Saab 340s, but has ordered 16 ATR 42-600s and four ATR 72-600s to replace its aging fleet of Saabs.

But the aircrafts won't be in flight next month because Federal Aviation Administration (F.A.A.) employees who certify an aircraft's airworthiness have been furloughed until further notice because of the government shutdown, which is now the longest in history heading into a month.

Before a new aircraft can take flight in the U.S., the F.A.A. puts it through a rigorous airworthiness certification process to make sure it's safe to fly.

"Certification activities are currently halted," an F.A.A. spokesperson told [The Points Guy](#), a lifestyle brand that helps travelers maximize their experience. "Employees who have a direct mission to ensure public safety, like air traffic controllers and the technicians who maintain the air traffic control system, remain on the job."

Silver Airways told TPG that while it's in the final phase of receiving regulatory approval from the F.A.A., the certification process has been put on pause for the two ATR 42-600s that it's already taken delivery of.

"While we understand that regulators are limited in what they can do during the government shutdown, we are exceedingly frustrated and disappointed that the shutdown is causing a delay in launching our new planes," a Silver Airways airline spokesperson told TPG.

The airline was supposed to launch a new nonstop route with the aircraft next month, operating between Fort Lauderdale and Pensacola, according to TPG.

"We got initial approval in December. We had days scheduled in January with the FAA, it never occurred," Silver Airways CEO Steve Rossum told CBS Miami. "We are heading into high season. We need every seat we can get in key markets."

The shutdown is affecting operations across the U.S. and its territories. See a list of government arms affected by the shutdown [here](#).

Feature Image: Silver Airways' ATR 42-600, courtesy of Silver Airways, via TPG.