

Alstom to introduce hydrogen-powered trains in U.K.

Jan. 7 (UPI) -- France-based Alstom presented Monday a new hydrogen train design for the U.K. market with the aim to build a fleet that will be up and running by 2022, following up on its introduction in Germany in September.

The new model, named Breeze, is based on a conversion of existing Class 321 trains, which are conventionally powered and used for commuter service in the U.K., said Alstom, adding it is working with the U.K.-based train operator Eversholt Rail. The design would serve to create a new fleet that will emit only water and "no harmful emissions at all," as well as provide more room for passengers.

"Alstom and Eversholt Rail are working closely with industry stakeholders to develop the business cases and evaluate detailed introduction plans for fleets" and hydrogen fuel infrastructure, Alstom said. "The Alstom facility in Widnes (Northwest England) will manage the conversion of the Breeze trains, creating high quality engineering jobs in this new, emerging sector," the company added. RELATED Spain's Valencia Port taps hydrogen to power operations "The railways need to decarbonize and the government has rightly set out a goal to eliminate diesel rolling stock by 2040," said Nick Crossfield, Alstom UK & Ireland Managing Director. Claire Perry, the U.K. minister for Energy and Clean Growth, added that the U.K. has budgeted \$29 billion to its "Industrial Strategy" efforts involving hydrogen transport. While Alstom's release did not provide additional detail on the U.K. program, a Monday report in The Times said that a deal has already been reached, and it involves the conversion of "more than 100" conventional-powered trains so that they can run on hydrogen. RELATED Researchers find alternative to pure platinum catalyst for hydrogen fuel cells Alstom in September helped start operation of the Coradia iLint hydrogen train in Germany, where it now operates daily in regular passenger service. The Coradia iLint connects cities in the Lower Saxony region of northern Germany. The train, designed to run in tracks with non-electrified wires, emits low levels of noise with exhaust being only steam and condensed water. Alstom said that while the hydrogen train introduction in Germany "is proof that hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are feasible, both technically and commercially," more infrastructure related to hydrogen fuel is needed to help achieve complete decarbonization of the hydrogen used in transport by 2030. RELATED France's Air Liquide to build \$150M hydrogen plant to fuel California cars "There is growing interest in Alstom's hydrogen technology worldwide, including in France where the president of the Occitanie region, Carole Delga, recently announced a proposal to introduce hydrogen trains there," Alstom said Monday.