

New zero-emissions ferry to begin operating in San Francisco

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A new zero-emissions ferry powered by hydrogen fuel cell technology has arrived in San Francisco, where it will undergo trial runs and preparations to carry passengers later this year.

The 70-foot catamaran is believed to be the first commercial maritime vessel in the United States powered entirely by [hydrogen fuel cells](#), officials said. The [boat](#) is a key part of an ambitious plan by the San Francisco Bay Ferry to replace a significant number of its pollutant-spewing diesel vessels with zero-emission watercraft by 2035.

"We know the future is zero emissions with marine transportation," San Francisco Bay Ferry spokesman Thomas Hall said in an interview Monday. "We're really pushing the envelope."

Known as the Sea Change, the aluminum catamaran can transport up to 75 passengers at a top speed of 15 knots, according to the California Air Resources Board. The boat will have enough hydrogen storage capacity for two days of normal operation.

Fuel cells operate like batteries and use [chemical energy](#) or hydrogen to produce electricity quietly with minimal moving parts, according to the U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Hydrogen fuel cells emit only water, addressing a critical need to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide spewed into the environment.

Crews will begin training on the Sea Change and outfitting it for passenger use in the coming weeks, Hall said. After the vessel is tested and inspected by the U.S. Coast Guard, it will begin taking passengers later this year.

The San Francisco Bay Ferry operates 16 vessels to cities including Oakland, Richmond and Vallejo.

The Angel Island-Tiburon Ferry, which transports tens of thousands of visitors annually from Tiburon to the [state park](#) on the island, recently announced that it would convert to an electric-propulsion vessel next year.

"We are very excited that the Angel Island will be the first of the short-run ferries in California to be 100% zero-emission," said Capt. Maggie McDonogh, owner and operator of the Angel Island-Tiburon Ferry.

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