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## Scaled Composites Model 437 enters Envelope Expansion



MOJAVE, Calif. – Sep 20, 2025 – The Scaled Composites [Model 437](#) re-entered flight test today after completion of significant work since first flight of the vehicle in 2024. This test is the start of a series of envelope expansion flights to prove out the flight capabilities of the Model 437 ahead of Northrop Grumman's Beacon autonomy flight tests.

In preparation for the Beacon flight test campaign, Scaled Composites work on the Model 437 included updating the vehicle's hydraulic system, interfacing Beacon subsystems into the airframe along with pilot interfaces into the cockpit. Concurrent with aircraft modifications, Scaled Composites and Northrop Grumman have worked closely together on hangar tests of the Beacon autonomy ecosystem incorporated in the aircraft.

Project engineer Yuto Shinagawa noted, "We had the challenge of taking an airplane that has only flown once and converting it into a versatile autonomous testbed, which demonstrates Scaled's agility and flexibility in achieving new test objectives. One example was assuring flight safety when engaging the autonomous system and how to effectively integrate protections into the flight controls. Great progress has been made toward realizing the Beacon autonomy ecosystem with the Model 437."

Scaled Composites leveraged extensive experience in aircraft modification to rapidly iterate autonomous systems in the Beacon ecosystem aboard the Model 437 testbed. This experience, tied with Northrop Grumman's autonomy expertise, allows a massive increase in the speed of innovation and refinement of the autonomy software.

Learn more about **Beacon™** [here](#).

## About Scaled

Founded in 1982 by Burt Rutan, Scaled Composites has averaged the first flight of a unique, new airplane per year: excelling at the rapid development of demonstrator and prototype aircraft, research flight testing, and pushing the boundaries of aerospace with each design, build, and test.

Our employees are hands-on and out-of-the-box thinkers with a passion for proving the impossible and enabling the execution of significant and impactful programs.

[www.scaled.com](http://www.scaled.com)

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