

Solar-powered plane *world.* lands near Washington +

WASHINGTON: A solar-powered plane nearing the close of a cross-continental journey landed at Dulles International Airport outside the U.S. capital early on Sunday, only one short leg to New York remaining on a voyage that opened in May.

Solar Impulse's website said the aircraft, with its massive wings and thousands of photovoltaic cells, "gracefully touched down" at 12.15 a.m. EDT after 14 hours and four minutes of flight from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Dulles in Washington's Virginia suburbs.

Pilot Bertrand Piccard was at the controls for the last time on the multi-leg "Across America" journey that began on May 3 in San Francisco. His fellow Swiss pilot, Andre Borschberg, is expected to fly

the last leg from Washington to New York City's John F. Kennedy International Airport early July, the website added.

It is the first bid by a solar plane capable of being airborne day and night without fuel to fly across the U.S., at speeds reaching about 40 mph. The plane opened by flying from San Francisco via Arizona, Texas, Missouri and Ohio onward to Dulles with stops of several days in cities along the way.

Organisers said in a blog post early on Sunday that Piccard soared across the Appalachian Mountains on a 435-mile (700-km) course from Cincinnati to the Washington area, averaging 31 mph (50 kph). It was the second phase of a leg that began in St. Louis. — AP