



Brightly unlocks carbon revenue for food rescue with first Verra credit issuance

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First issuance under Verra's VM0046 methodology converts avoided food-waste emissions into a potential revenue stream for nonprofit food rescue organisations



Food rescue is entering the carbon market with a new economic proposition: the act of diverting edible food from waste streams can now generate verified climate credits alongside its social impact. Brightly, a food waste and climate solutions company, has announced the first issuance of carbon credits under Verra's VM0046 Methodology for Reducing Food Loss and Waste. The issuance recognises avoided methane emissions generated when nonprofit food rescue organisations redirect edible food back into the human food supply rather than allowing it to enter waste streams.

The development connects two problems that have traditionally been addressed through separate systems—food waste and food insecurity—while adding a third dimension: climate finance. Food loss and waste is estimated to account for 8–10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the United Nations Environment Programme. By assigning measurable climate value to food rescue, Brightly aims to create an additional source of earned revenue for organisations already recovering surplus food.

"Brightly was founded on the belief that addressing climate change and hunger go hand in hand," said Andy Levitt, founder and CEO, Brightly. "This issuance transforms the extraordinary work of our food rescue partners into verified climate impact and a new source of funding to help them do even more." The project represents more than three years of work involving Brightly, the Feeding America network and independent food rescue organisations across the US. Brightly developed the data and measurement infrastructure required to quantify the climate impact of qualifying food rescue activity at scale under Verra's methodology.

The credits were independently validated and verified by SCS Global Services, a validation and verification body approved under Verra's Verified Carbon Standard programme. Following Verra's review and approval, the resulting Verified Carbon Units were issued. The economics of the model are central to its significance. Food rescue organisations generate the underlying environmental benefit through their recovery operations, while carbon-credit sales create a potential mechanism to monetise that impact. Brightly said the majority of net proceeds from credit sales will be returned to participating food rescue organisations to help finance trucks, drivers, refrigeration, staff and other infrastructure required to recover and distribute surplus food.

For food banks, the model could broaden the value proposition of food rescue beyond hunger relief. “Food rescue organisations have long understood that rescuing good food creates benefits beyond hunger relief,” said Eric S. Cooper, president and CEO of the San Antonio Food Bank and a member of the Feeding America Board of Directors. The ability to quantify the climate benefit, he added, could help attract additional support for food rescue.

The first issuance covers qualifying food rescue activity between March 2020 and December 2023. Participating organisations rescued 15.3 billion pounds of food during the period. After accounting for historical baselines and project-related emissions, 3.1 billion pounds of qualifying food rescue generated 721,649 Verified Carbon Units.

The credits have also received an A ex-ante rating from BeZero Carbon, indicating a high likelihood that each credit represents one metric tonne of avoided greenhouse gas emissions. The scale of Brightly’s current network provides a potentially significant base for the model. The company works with 198 Feeding America partner food banks and 28 independent nonprofit food rescue organisations across all 50 US states and approximately 97 per cent of US counties. Collectively, these organisations rescue and distribute more than 5 billion pounds of surplus food annually.

That footprint also gives companies a route to support food rescue and climate action across the communities where they operate, while creating a more measurable connection between corporate climate spending and local food recovery. The broader challenge remains substantial. Nearly 48 million people, including more than 14 million children, experience food insecurity in the US, even as large volumes of edible food remain outside the human food system. Brightly’s first Verra issuance therefore represents more than a carbon-market milestone: it tests whether climate finance can help build the operating economics needed to move more edible food from surplus to people.