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ReFED Launches First-Ever Food Waste Roadmap Calling on Business, Government and Nonprofit Leaders to Innovate and Invest to Unlock \$100 Billion in Economic Value

Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste Report Shows Path to Cut Waste by 20% while Spurring Economic Growth, Creating Jobs, Increasing Food Security and Protecting the Environment

- ReFED's *Roadmap* identifies how we can take action today to cut food waste by 20%, putting the country on target to reach the national goal of 50% reduction by 2030.
- The *Roadmap*'s primary finding is significant: food waste *can* be cut nationwide by over 13 million tons annually by implementing a suite of 27 solutions that are feasible and cost-effective today, creating \$100 billion in economic value to society over a decade.
- The *Roadmap* is estimated to generate over 15,000 jobs, reduce 1.5% of national freshwater use, double the number of meals donated to relieve hunger and divert nearly 18 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

San Francisco, CA (March 9, 2016) – Every year, American consumers, businesses, and farms spend \$218 billion growing, processing, transporting, and disposing food that is never eaten. As a result, up to 52 million tons of food is sent to landfills annually, plus an additional estimated 10 million tons get discarded or go unharvested on farms. Meanwhile, 1 in 7 Americans is food insecure without reliable access to sufficient affordable, nutritious food. A new report released today from [Rethink Food Waste Through Economics and Data](#) (ReFED) – a collaboration of over 30 business, government, investor, foundation, and nonprofit leaders committed to reducing U.S. food waste – analyzes 27 viable food waste solutions that can be taken today to cut food waste in the United States by 20%. This will put the country on track to achieve the national 50% food waste reduction target by 2030, as established by the U.S. government in September 2015.

The [Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste](#) is the first-ever national economic study of food waste to engage a multi-stakeholder group to develop a true plan for action. Its implementation would help spur economic growth, create jobs, increase food security and reduce environmental damage caused by food waste.

The primary finding of the *Roadmap* is significant: actions that are feasible and cost-effective today **can cut food waste nationwide by over 20% — or 13 million tons annually**. The *Roadmap* will require \$18 billion of investment over the next decade, less than a tenth of a penny of investment per pound of food waste reduced. This investment will yield a net economic value to society of approximately \$100 billion over the same period through consumer savings on lower food bills, new sources of business profit, additional meals donated to the hungry, and a lower government tax burden.

Formed in early 2015, ReFED seeks to unlock new philanthropic and investment capital, along with technology and policy innovation, to catalyze more than **15,000 new jobs**, annually recover over **1.8 billion meals for the hungry**, **reduce national water use by over one trillion gallons**, and **cut greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 18 million tons**.

“Reducing food waste is one of the most tangible ways we can all help contribute to a healthier planet. What is so exciting about the *Roadmap* is that it clearly identifies actions that can be taken today, which will provide immediate economic benefits to consumers and businesses,” said **Sarah Vared, Interim Director of ReFED**. “The *Roadmap* is just the beginning. We look forward to this spurring further collaboration and action towards meeting our nation’s 50% reduction goal.”

“Our family foundation is proud to be a seed funder of ReFED. We’ve been investing in food waste issues for the past decade and saw a real need to develop a roadmap as a way to galvanize additional funding and action toward this important issue,” added **Jesse Fink, Trustee, The Fink Family Foundation**. “This report will serve as a path to true impact that yields both economic and environmental benefits.”

“This roadmap created by the ReFED group presents a bold and data-centered approach to tackling the issue of wasted food,” noted **Mathy Stanislaus, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Land and Emergency Management, EPA**. “Formed by leaders in private industry and nonprofits, the ReFED initiative serves as a great example of the innovative collaborations needed to help eliminate the growing amount of nutritious food going to American landfills each year. As noted at the first-ever U.S. summit on food waste, to achieve the United States goal to reduce food loss and waste by half by the year 2030, we will need leaders from all sectors outside Washington, DC. These leaders, like the ones in ReFED, can challenge each other and take on an issue that affects us all.”

The *Roadmap* uses an analytical framework to assess where waste occurs and the economic potential of each solution, enabling a level of prioritization that has not been possible in previous research. To develop the report, ReFED engaged nationally recognized consulting firms [Deloitte Consulting LLP](#) and [Resource Recycling Systems](#), and collaborated closely with The Closed Loop Fund, MissionPoint Partners, and Natural Resources Defense Council. To ensure the *Roadmap* accurately represented the current landscape and included actionable insights, ReFED built an Advisory Board of leading organizations across sectors including Ahold, Bon Appetit Management Company, Sodexo, Walmart, Waste Management, Feeding America, Grocery Manufacturers Association, Harvard University, World Resources Institute, California State Board of Food and Agriculture, the EPA, and the cities of New York, Phoenix, and Seattle.

“This report shows the President’s food waste goals are not only achievable, but meeting them will save consumers billions of dollars every year. When we waste food, we waste all of the resources it takes to bring it to our plates—from money to farmland, energy and water,” noted **Dana Gunders, senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council and author of the [Waste Free Kitchen Handbook](#)**. “The Obama administration and the food industry should use this roadmap to prioritize actions that keep more food on our plates, and out of the trash.”

“Many food businesses have accepted food waste as an unavoidable hit to their income statements. Yet, as the ReFED research has shown, food businesses are leaving almost \$2 billion of potential profit on the table annually,” said **Kyle Tanger, a director with Deloitte Consulting LLP and leader of its [Sustainability practice](#)**. “With shrinking margins and increased supply chain volatility, it’s crucial for food businesses to take steps to understand where food waste is occurring in their value chains — and invest in solutions to reduce it and recover profits.”

Tanger continued, “To support businesses’ efforts in food waste reduction and profit recovery, Deloitte has built robust waste and financial tracking tools. Retailers, restaurants and food-service providers should first identify where waste occurs in their operations and supply chains, then apply these tools to test, pilot and scale food waste solutions.”

“The ReFED project has been beneficial to inform Sodexo’s waste strategy in the short term and inform considerations for the future,” said **Deborah Hecker, Vice President Corporate Responsibility, Sodexo**. “The ReFED team pulled together content experts from across the country and collaborated to create unique opportunities in local communities for working to solve the larger problem of food waste and recovery. We look forward to sharing results of our efforts soon.”

Other key findings include:

- **We Face a Funding Gap:** Most of the \$18 billion of new investment needed will flow from existing government legislation and natural market forces. However, an estimated \$100 to

\$200 million of new catalytic capital is needed annually to de-risk new innovations, overcome industry bottlenecks, provide low cost project finance, and enable multi-stakeholder solutions.

- **Consumers and Businesses Benefit:** Scaling *Roadmap* solutions is estimated to unlock \$10 billion in total annual economic value for society (\$100 billion over a decade), including \$5.6 billion in lower food bills for families and nearly \$2 billion in new business profit potential, mainly from restaurants, institutions, and food service providers.
- **Recycling is Most Scalable:** By investing in recycling infrastructure, training, and policy, 9.5 million tons of food scraps – nearly three-quarters of the total *Roadmap* potential – can be diverted annually from landfills through anaerobic digestion and composting, reducing an estimated 4.8 million tons in greenhouse gases while creating over 11,000 new jobs.
- **Prevention is Most Cost-Effective:** Standardizing date labels, consumer education campaigns and packaging adjustments are the most cost-effective solutions that prevent waste from occurring in the first place and provide substantial consumer savings.

These benefits are achievable, feasible, and realistic today, but they will not be realized without a concerted effort. Stakeholders must commit to four levers of action: new financing to scale proven solutions, commonsense policy change, adoption of emerging innovations, and consumer and employee education. The *Roadmap* is just the beginning. In the year ahead, ReFED will build on the efforts of other pioneers in this space and will facilitate collaboration with key stakeholders to begin working towards the implementation of these solutions. Additional tools and resources will be shared on the ReFED website throughout the year. Ideas, feedback and expertise to build on this work are welcomed and encouraged.

For direct links to the *Roadmap*'s findings and relevant infographics and resources, visit www.refed.com.

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About ReFED

Formed in 2015, Rethink Food Waste Through Economics and Data (ReFED) is a collaboration of over 30 business, nonprofit and government leaders committed to reducing U.S. food waste by up to 50% by 2030. In March 2016, ReFED released the [Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste](#) – the first-ever national economic study of food waste to provide a feasible guide for action. ReFED's recommended solutions seek to unlock new philanthropic and investment capital, along with technology and policy innovation, to catalyze over 15,000 new jobs, recover nearly two billion meals for the hungry, and achieve significant reductions in our national water use and greenhouse gas emissions. For more information and additional tools and resources, visit www.refed.com.