

An NFL First: 49ers and United Airlines Launch SAF Pilot Project to Reduce Carbon Emissions from Air Travel

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United and the San Francisco 49ers announced that the team has become the first in the NFL to purchase sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). As an initial step toward addressing emissions concerns, the team has purchased enough SAF to cover its game-related flying on United from San Francisco to Los Angeles this Sunday.

SAF is an alternative to conventional jet fuel that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 85% on a lifecycle basis – from production to end use – because it is made from renewable materials rather than oil. United’s SAF is certified by an independent third-party as meeting several sustainability criteria, including its carbon intensity.

United was the first airline to create a goal of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emission by 2050, without relying on voluntary carbon offsets, and remains a U.S. industry leader in the purchase and use of SAF. The airline purchased more sustainable fuel than any U.S. airline in 2023 and has used a blend of SAF at five airports in the U.S. and Europe including San Francisco International Airport – among the most locations of any U.S. airline.

“SAF has the potential to be a powerful tool to help reduce carbon emissions from flying, but the industry is still in its infancy, supply is limited, and most people don’t know what it is,” said United CEO Scott Kirby. “We’re proud to partner with like-minded organizations like the 49ers to demonstrate and elevate to a broader audience why it’s important to support real solutions like SAF.”

The 49ers have a strong history of leading community-based initiatives and environmental stewardship in San Francisco. Levi's® Stadium was the first United States professional football stadium to have achieved a LEED Gold certification, and its solar panels generate enough energy to power every 49ers home game. United was also a founding partner of the 49ers' "[Faithful to the Planet](#)" initiative, a charitable project led by the 49ers and several corporate partners to fund programs that reduce pollution in the oceans, and plant and protect new trees.

"We are thrilled to join United's Eco-Skies Alliance, and take this important step towards reducing our carbon footprint," said Brent Schoeb, Chief Revenue and Marketing Officer for the 49ers. "As the first NFL team to invest in SAF, this is a meaningful part of our commitment to more sustainable practices, and we're grateful to United for leading the way in this space."