

Zero Waste Marin: Annual Report for FY 24/25



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Table of Contents

Letter from the Executive Director	3
Zero Waste Marin: Who We Are	5
Major Program Accomplishments: FY 2024/25	7
Regulatory Compliance & Reporting	8
SB 1383 Outreach and Communication Efforts.....	8
SB 1383 Edible Food Recovery Program	8
Required Recovered Organic Waste Procurement (ROWP).....	10
CalRecycle Electronic Report (EAR)	11
Annual Audit	12
Compliance Software	12
Waste Characterization Study	13
Programs Overview	14
Zero Waste Schools Program	14
Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Programs.....	16
Outreach Pilot Programs: FY 24/25.....	20
Outreach Efforts & Community Events	23
Community Event Attendance.....	23
Grocery Store Tabling.....	24
Social Media.....	25
Template Newsletter and Social Media Blurbs	25
Spring Campaign: Be a Composting Rock Star.....	26
Looking Ahead: Goals for FY 25/26	27

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Letter from the Executive Director

The first half of the current fiscal year began on a high note, with the addition of new staff and increased program capacity. This momentum helped us advance key initiatives and better serve the community. However, we also faced some staffing challenges, including the departure of two valued team members and one of our dedicated Climate Corps Fellows. In the face of these setbacks, our team rose to the occasion—stepping up, taking on expanded roles, and ensuring continued progress across all fronts. We anticipate having a fully staffed team in place by the second quarter of FY 25–26.

Having staff dedicated exclusively to the development, implementation, administration, and evaluation of Zero Waste Marin's programs is essential. This focus enables us to effectively respond to evolving regulations, shifting recycling markets, increasing volumes of toxic and hazardous materials, and the rising costs associated with waste management. It also ensures that we maintain compliance with state mandates while continuing to innovate and serve the community.

Despite challenges, FY 2024–2025 has been a productive and impactful year for Zero Waste Marin. Below are highlights of our accomplishments:

FY 2024–2025 Accomplishments

- **Strategic Communications**

- ✓ Developed a data-informed communications strategy rooted in community feedback, equity, and accessibility.
- ✓ Completed a comprehensive branding and identity analysis to strengthen public understanding of our role and services.

- **Enhanced Outreach**

- ✓ Created and updated print and digital outreach materials to support all Zero Waste Marin programs and improve engagement.

- **Data-Driven Program Development**

- ✓ Completed a County-wide Waste Characterization Study to identify opportunities to divert recyclable and compostable materials from landfills.
- ✓ Launched the SMART1383 recordkeeping system to streamline County-wide compliance with SB 1383.

- **Innovation in Hazardous Waste Management**

- ✓ Piloted household hazardous waste (HHW) programs to safely recycle solar panels and prevent vape pens and cartridges from reaching landfills.

- **Regulatory Enforcement & Collaboration**

- ✓ Initiated SB 1383 business inspections and enforcement in coordination with County departments.

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- ✓ Supported member agencies in compiling and submitting Implementation Records (IRs) for SB 1383.
- ✓ Maintained ongoing communication with CalRecycle's LAMD and JACE branches through site visits and compliance reviews.
- **Market & Community Engagement**
 - ✓ Explored new market development strategies and educational initiatives in collaboration with the Local Task Force.
 - ✓ Participated in North Bay Zero Waste Week (October 12–20, 2024) for the first time, expanding community engagement.
- **Performance & Accountability**
 - ✓ Continued monitoring performance metrics to track progress on work plan goals and fiscal accountability.
 - ✓ Successfully met the Recovered Organic Waste Product (ROWP) Procurement target for 2024 and are on track to meet the 2025 goal ahead of schedule.

Looking Ahead

One of the ongoing challenges we face is ensuring convenient access to buyback and redemption centers for California Redemption Value (CRV) materials—an issue that persists since the public closure of Marin Recycling during the pandemic. Meanwhile, an increasing number of consumer products contain hazardous or toxic components, yet often lack safe, affordable, and accessible disposal options.

Looking to the future, we are closely following the implementation of the **Plastic Pollution Producer Responsibility Act (SB 54)**—California's first extended producer responsibility (EPR) law for packaging and plastic single-use foodware. This landmark legislation represents a critical step forward by holding producers accountable for the full lifecycle of their products.

In the ever-evolving field of hazardous and solid waste management, one constant remains: the critical need for sustained and expanded public outreach and education. These efforts are not just helpful—they are foundational to effective policy implementation, long-term waste reduction, and achieving the environmental goals we all share.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to another year of meaningful progress and collective impact.

Kimberly Scheibly
Executive Director

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Zero Waste Marin: Who We Are

The Zero Waste Marin Joint Powers Authority is a governmental agency that represents all 11 cities and towns in Marin and the unincorporated areas of the County of Marin. Our mission is to protect our natural resources by promoting source reduction of waste through reuse, repair, and more mindful purchasing. To make responsible waste sorting easy, we offer a variety of programs including: the Household Hazardous Waste program, the Zero Waste Schools Program, and public outreach and education programs. These programs align with County-wide goals to act on climate change and promote healthy, safe, and sustainable communities.

The Zero Waste Marin Joint Powers Authority Board is comprised of the city and town managers of Belvedere, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Novato, Ross, San Anselmo, San Rafael, Sausalito and Tiburon and the County of Marin. Zero Waste Marin ensures Marin's compliance with the California Integrated Waste Management Act and its waste reduction mandates, among other State-wide waste laws.

Zero Waste Marin staff

The Zero Waste Marin team is made up of seven staff members, who each manage different aspects of Zero Waste Marin programs. Zero Waste Marin staff are employed by the County of Marin and have a staffing agreement with the Joint Powers Authority to provide staffing to run Zero Waste Marin programs.

Our team members include:

Kimberly Scheibly
Executive Director

Amy Kolnes
Senior Planner

Casey Fritz
Senior Planner

Kathy Rico
Senior Planner

Jessica Ruiz
*Senior Program
Coordinator*

Andrew Shelton
*Waste Management
Specialist*

Meilin Tsao
*Waste Management
Specialist*

Zero Waste Marin Board Members

The Zero Waste Marin Joint Powers Authority Board is made up of the eleven City and Town Managers of Marin's cities and towns and the County Executive for Marin County. There are also alternates for nearly all jurisdictions who attend the Board meetings and are able to vote on behalf of their jurisdiction.

There are also three Committees on the Board: the Executive Committee, the Budget Committee, and the Programs Committee. These committees meet in addition to the full Joint Powers Authority Board.

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Our Board members and Alternates include:

Robert Zadnik

*City Manager
City of Belvedere*

Dan Schwarz

*City Manager
City of Larkspur*

David Donery

*Town Manager
Town of San Anselmo*

Antony Boyd

*Public Works Director
City of Belvedere (Alt)*

Shannon O'Hare

*Asst. City Manager
City of Larkspur (Alt)*

Briget Wipfler

*Climate Action Coordinator
Town of San Anselmo (Alt)*

Adam Wolff

*Town Manager
Town of Corte Madera*

Todd Cusimano

*City Manager
City of Mill Valley*

John Stefanski

*Asst City Manager
City of San Rafael*

Phoebe Goulden

*Climate Action & Adaptation
Coordinator
Town of Corte Madera (Alt)*

Grace Ledwith

*Climate Action &
Sustainability Coordinator
City of Mill Valley (Alt)*

Cory Bytof

*Sustainability Manager
City of San Rafael (Alt)*

Derek Johnson

*County Executive
County of Marin*

Bill Rose

*Asst. City Manager
City of Novato*

Chris Zapata

*City Manager
City of Sausalito*

Dan Eilerman

*Assistant CAO
County of Marin (Alt)*

Gretchen Schubeck

*Sustainability Coordinator
City of Novato (Alt)*

Catie Thow Garcia

*Resilience & Sustainability
Manager
City of Sausalito (Alt)*

Heather Abrams

*Town Manager
Town of Fairfax*

Christa Johnson

*Town Manager
Town of Ross*

Greg Chanis

*Town Manager
Town of Tiburon*

Maureen Borthwick

*Recreation Manager
Town of Ross (Alt)*

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Major Program Accomplishments: FY 2024/25

Below is a high-level summary of the major accomplishments from the 2024/25 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).



Hosted ZWM's first Climate Corps Fellows.



Completed Marin's first County-wide waste characterization study.



Collected vape pen accumulations at schools for proper handling in partnership with MCOE and GAIACA.



Completed the migration to new recordkeeping software, SMART1383.



Hosted ZWM's first ever compost giveaway during 2024 Zero Waste Week.



Worked on a solar panel reuse and recycling pilot.



Implemented monthly meetings with city and town Sustainability staff.



Introduced Repair Fairs to Marin as a pilot program with Reuse Alliance.



Updated and finalized a new HHW facility agreement.

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Regulatory Compliance & Reporting

SB 1383 Outreach and Communication Efforts

Zero Waste Marin staff undertook several major outreach efforts related to SB 1383 during the 24/25 Fiscal Year. A postcard was mailed in March 2025 to all residential addresses (97,280 homes or apartment units) in Marin County across all jurisdictions to remind residents of which materials belong in their green compost cart, the law requiring separation of organics from landfill, and the benefits of composting. This postcard had all information in English and Spanish.

Zero Waste Marin staff also continued outreach efforts via social media, the website, and in-person events. Staff regularly posted on social media channels, including Instagram and Facebook, about relevant topics such as the importance of composting, how to sort waste correctly, and how waste is processed after it is picked up at the curb. Staff continued to offer trainings and technical assistance to businesses and other sites that requested support or needed additional information about complying with SB 1383.

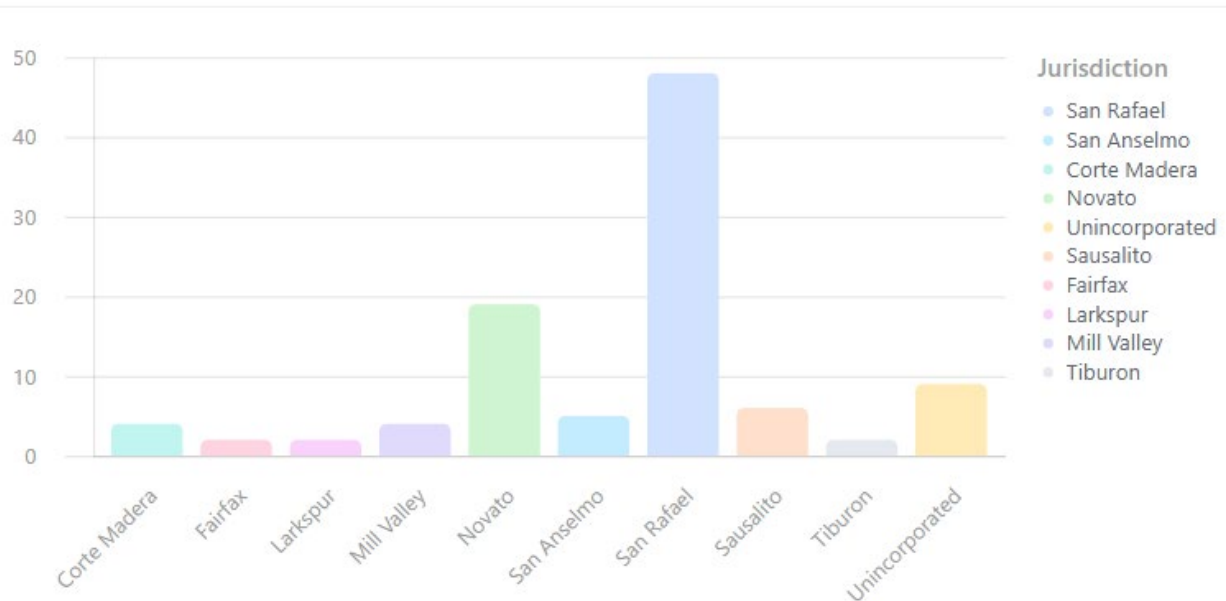
SB 1383 Edible Food Recovery Program

In the 24/25 Fiscal Year, Zero Waste Marin staff continued outreach to covered commercial edible food generators to ensure they were aware of their requirements under SB 1383. ZWM staff implemented outreach in-person and over email. Staff completed 47 site visits to covered commercial edible food generators across September and December 2024 focused on educating the generators and assessing their readiness for formal inspections. Staff then emailed all edible food generators in January 2025 to remind them of requirements and ask them to fill out a short survey about the current status of their edible food recovery programs.

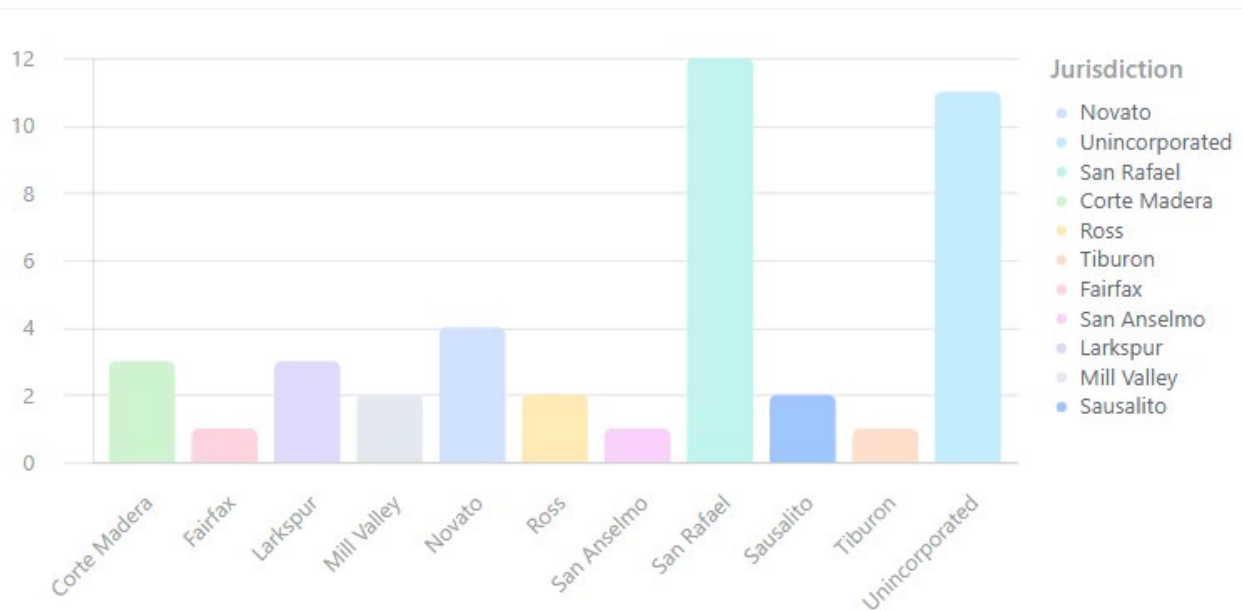
Staff continued to manage the list of covered commercial edible food generators in AirTable, a software that allows staff to maintain information about each generator and allows generators to respond to surveys via unique links specific to their site. Below, the two bar charts show the number of generators located in each jurisdiction within Marin County. These graphs were created in AirTable using the data managed in the ZWM database.

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Count of T1 Generators by Jurisdiction



Count of T2 Generators by Jurisdiction



During FY 23/24, contracted with HF&H Consultants to assess and improve the edible food recovery program. This contract was successfully completed in May 2024. There were several main recommendations that were included in the final report from this contract, which ZWM worked on implementing during the 24/25 Fiscal Year:

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1. **Recommendation:** Funding for on-call [Food Recovery Organization] staff to alleviate operational gaps when full-time staff is unavailable or to account for irregular increases in recovery demand.
 - ✓ **ZWM follow-up:** In August of 2024, ZWM [released a Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) for direct edible food recovery support in Marin County. The goal was to make more funding available for direct edible food recovery work in Marin County. Two proposals were received in response to this RFP, one from ExtraFood and one from the San Francisco Marin Food Bank. As a result, ZWM entered into contract with both entities using Local Assistance Grant funds for SB 1383 implementation in the fall of 2024.
2. **Recommendation:** Trainings for Tier 1 and Tier 2 Generators to maximize quality donations and ensure their recovery practices meet the needs of the FROs and their FDP communities.
 - ✓ **ZWM follow-up:** ZWM filmed a video in coordination with ExtraFood and the SF Marin Food Bank on best practices for setting up a food donation system. The goal of this video was to help prepare edible food generators to donate food in a way that is conducive to high-quality donations. This video was completed in the fall of 2024 is available on the Zero Waste Marin website and [ZWM YouTube channel](#).
3. **Recommendation:** Developing alternative approaches to recovering food from low-volume and infrequent donors to meet SB 1383 compliance without compromising the operational effectiveness of SF-MFB and ExtraFood.
 - ✓ **ZWM follow-up:** Very small volume donations or infrequent donations pose a unique logistical challenge. It can be hard for food recovery organizations to predict when these donations might become available. ZWM staff have been considering alternatives, including systems that allow the restaurant to post their own donation for direct pick-up by a consumer, such as Too Good To Go.

Required Recovered Organic Waste Procurement (ROWP)

SB 1383 includes a Recovered Organic Waste Products (ROWP) procurement target, as defined by CalRecycle, which requires jurisdictions to procure 0.08 tons of organic waste per resident of the jurisdiction. Through signed Letters of Agreement (LOAs) with each jurisdiction, ZWM is responsible for all member agencies' ROWP compliance. From the eligible products list outlined by SB 1383, staff have chosen to purchase compost and composted mulch. The total ROWP procurement target for all of Marin County is 20,621 tons which is the equivalent of 11,961 tons of compost.

In calendar year 2024, ZWM was responsible for 65% of the total procurement target. Staff purchased 13,219.61 tons of ROWP, equivalent to 99%, and the remaining 1% came from compost and mulch projects conducted separately by the member agencies. In the fall of 2024 and spring of 2025 (FY25), ZWM worked with a direct service provider

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to purchase and deploy the majority of Marin's required compost in the Central Valley. Staff also grew the partnership with West Marin Compost to purchase and place compost directly in Marin, which will continue in FY 25/26. This project directly supports a local facility, Marin's agricultural community, and strengthens an in-county circular economy.

Additionally, staff coordinated and hosted the first-ever compost giveaway for residents at the Marin County Civic Center. Twenty cubic yards of compost from WM EarthCare in Novato was available for free for any Marin resident on an October Sunday from 9AM-1PM. Staff were unable to giveaway the entire pile, but Marin County Parks gladly hauled and utilized the remaining compost. Staff gained valuable insights from hosting this initial event, and plan to more strategically host future compost giveaways for Marin's residents. Additionally, as part of the zero waste funds available to member agencies in Spring 2025, ZWM, Marin County Parks, and the Marin Housing Authority coordinated a donation of 20 cubic yards of compost to a low-income housing project's community garden in Marin City.



Left: Compost was delivered to a community garden in Marin City. Right: Marin residents collect free compost as part of an October 2024 compost giveaway event.

In the FY 23/24 Annual Report, ZWM highlighted local entities staff were actively partnering with to address Marin County's specific compost needs. At the close of FY 24/25, staff are happy to report that existing partnerships have been strengthened and ZWM looks forward to continuing to grow collaborative efforts.

CalRecycle Electronic Report (EAR)

Each year, Zero Waste Marin staff submit the required Electronic Annual Report (EAR) to CalRecycle on behalf of all member agencies. This report provides the State with a comprehensive overview of key metrics related to waste disposal and recovery efforts across the region.

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SB 1383 Implementation and Support

The 2024 reporting cycle marks the third complete year of data collection under the SB 1383 regulations, which came into effect on January 1, 2022. In accordance with the SB 1383 Letter of Agreement dated April 20, 2023, Zero Waste Marin staff extended additional support to the member agencies of Belvedere, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Novato, Ross, San Anselmo, San Rafael, Sausalito, Tiburon and Unincorporated Marin to ensure compliance with these requirements.

Reporting Categories

The EAR includes data across multiple categories essential to tracking SB 1383 compliance. Reporting includes but is not limited to: Procurement, Edible Food Recovery, Collection Systems, Education and Outreach, MWELO, C&D and CalGreen, Household Hazardous Waste Programs, Waivers and Exemptions, Contamination, Inspections and Complaints, Enforcement and Monitoring and Planning Documentation.

Bay Cities Refuse, Marin Sanitary Service, Mill Valley Refuse, and Recology provided data specific to their Commercial and Residential waste programs. This information was combined with reports from member agencies and additional input supplied by staff. The final report contains over 1,000 data points and more than 60 narrative summaries that offer additional insight into various waste reduction and hazardous waste programs.

Establishing a Performance Baseline

With three full years of SB 1383 reporting now completed as of August 1, 2025, staff now can establish a data baseline. This benchmark enables tracking of trends and supports ongoing process improvements through measurable performance metrics.

Annual Audit

In accordance with the by-laws set forth in the Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste Management Authority agreement, Zero Waste Marin undergoes an annual audit of its financial statements to ensure record accuracy and maintain fiscal transparency.

For the FY 2023–24 audit, Zero Waste Marin introduced a range of process improvement strategies aimed at strengthening future financial reporting. These enhancements included process optimization measures, the integration of project and program management tools, and the identification and correction of control deficiencies.

For a comprehensive overview of the FY 2023–24 audit findings, please refer to the May 16, 2024 Agenda Packet, available on the [Zero Waste Marin website](#).

Compliance Software

In FY 23/24, Zero Waste Marin staff completed an Information for Bid (IFB) to evaluate options for a platform to act as a centralized repository for recordkeeping of various California solid waste regulatory documentation, including SB 1383. After extensive

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evaluation of potential vendors, ZWM staff chose to award SMART1383 with the contract as it offers a fully integrated platform that is robust, yet user-friendly.

The newly implemented SMART1383 platform provides a fully integrated database that aligns with the recordkeeping requirements associated with SB1383. This content management system (CMS) allows jurisdictions and haulers to quickly access account information, activities and tasks, inspections details, waivers, program compliance reports for the over 6,000 commercial generators in a centralized location.

A key differentiator of SMART1383 is its editable account and contact management functionality, which allows users to make real-time updates. This feature enhances the accuracy of compliance data and enables dynamic, on-demand analytics to inform decision-making and track progress toward regulatory goals.

With SMART1383 now in place, Zero Waste Marin is better equipped to streamline compliance processes, improve data transparency, and support jurisdictions in meeting the growing demands of California's solid waste regulations.

Waste Characterization Study

A waste characterization study (WCS) is the process of sampling and sorting materials found in one (or multiple) specified waste streams to understand the material composition of what is ending up in that stream. In the Fall of 2024 Zero Waste Marin initiated a Waste Characterization Study of the landfill-bound materials generated in Marin County's geographic borders. This is the first time a WCS has been conducted to include the entirety of the County's landfill waste stream. Studies in Marin have been executed in the past, though they have been limited to the specific hauler's service area who was overseeing the study. Staff informally requested proposals from interested parties, then went into contract with SCS Engineers who conducted the physical characterizations and generated the final report.

In December 2024 and January 2025, SCS Engineers sampled and sorted eighty 200-pound samples into 74 pre-determined material categories. This portion of the study was conducted at Redwood Landfill in Novato and included both consistent and specifically determined residential, commercial, and multi-family unit garbage routes from all of the franchised haulers in the County (Bay Cities Refuse Service, Marin Sanitary Service, Mill



A physical characterization of landfill-bound material from hauler loads conducted at Redwood Landfill in Novato.

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Valley Refuse Service, Recology Sonoma Marin, and Tamalpais Community Services District). The second portion of the study used visual characterization techniques to analyze self-hauled material at the Marin Resource Recovery Center (MRRC) in March 2025.



A self-haul load that was visually inspected and characterized at the Marin Resource Recovery Center (MRRC).

The overall results from the physical characterizations inspected at Redwood Landfill highlighted that the biggest material category currently in Marin’s landfill stream are organics categories defined by the Senate Bill 1383 (2016) regulations at 36.5% of the total material. This finding directed ZWM staff to focus our Spring and Summer 2025 campaign on the importance of diverting food and yard waste from the landfill stream and into the organics stream (the green container). Overall, SCS found that approximately 60% of the materials currently in the landfill stream are “divertible, potentially divertible, or compostable”. ZWM will be using this data to host public workshops, guide future programs, and as a baseline metric for future analysis of progress.

Programs Overview

Zero Waste Schools Program

The Zero Waste Schools Program (ZWSP) began working with Marin County schools in 2015 with the intent to help school sites begin or improve recycling and composting programs. To date, the ZWSP has worked with more than 40 school sites and continues to grow. The focus of the program is to help schools become compliant with mandatory

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state-wide waste laws, reduce the amount of waste they send to landfill, and empower students to make a change at their school and in their community.

During the 2024-25 Fiscal Year, the Schools program focused on supporting new campuses with onboarding into the program and continuing to support the creativity of our continuing schools. Zero Waste Marin staff coordinated with Schools Program consultant Strategic Energy Innovations (SEI) to offer flexible support to schools to develop a system that works well for their specific needs. New resources include a one-pager with ideas for structuring Green Teams, an infrastructure “catalog” for schools to choose which waste sorting bins work best for them, and a “menu” of middle school educational options tailored for the layout and structure of middle schools.



Student-made poster for Coleman Elementary School's "Green Week" initiative.

The Certification aspect of the Schools Program aims to recognize the efforts of schools to reduce their landfill waste and improve recycling and composting on campus. There are four Certification tiers: bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. During the 24/25 Fiscal Year, 25 out of our 40 school sites were certified (63%). The following Certification levels were achieved:



The Schools Program offered feedback and encouragement to all school sites and will help set goals and provide ongoing support for all school sites regardless of Certification status.

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Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Programs

Pilot: Solar Panel Collection Program

Throughout fiscal year 24/25, Zero Waste Marin's HHW Programs implemented a pilot program for solar panel collection. The intention of this program was to understand how residents dispose of old, broken, or defective solar panels and how best to propose reuse, recycling, or disposal alternatives. ZWM sought to educate residents on best practices for removing solar panels to create reuse opportunities for functional units. In addition, ZWM sought to collect data to determine the cost estimates for a program that will best benefit Marin County Residents. ZWM contracted with the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) to support program development, implementation, and data collection. The pilot program was divided into two phases, which had the following components:

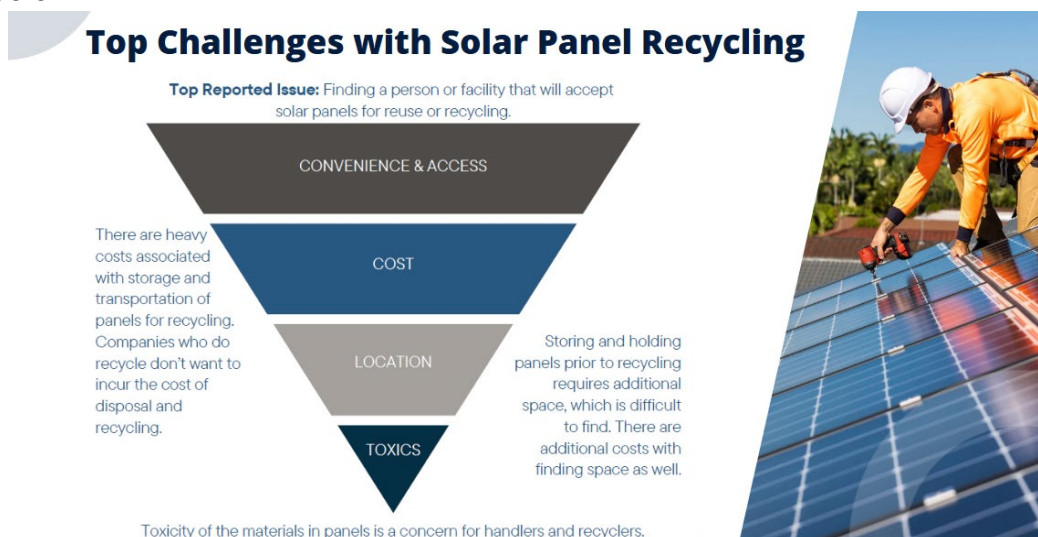
Phase I

1. Development of project tracker and an outreach campaign.
2. Market research.
3. Launch of collection event survey.
4. Planning for the collection of solar panels.
5. Establish contractors and vendors for event(s).
6. Work on preliminary report.

Phase II

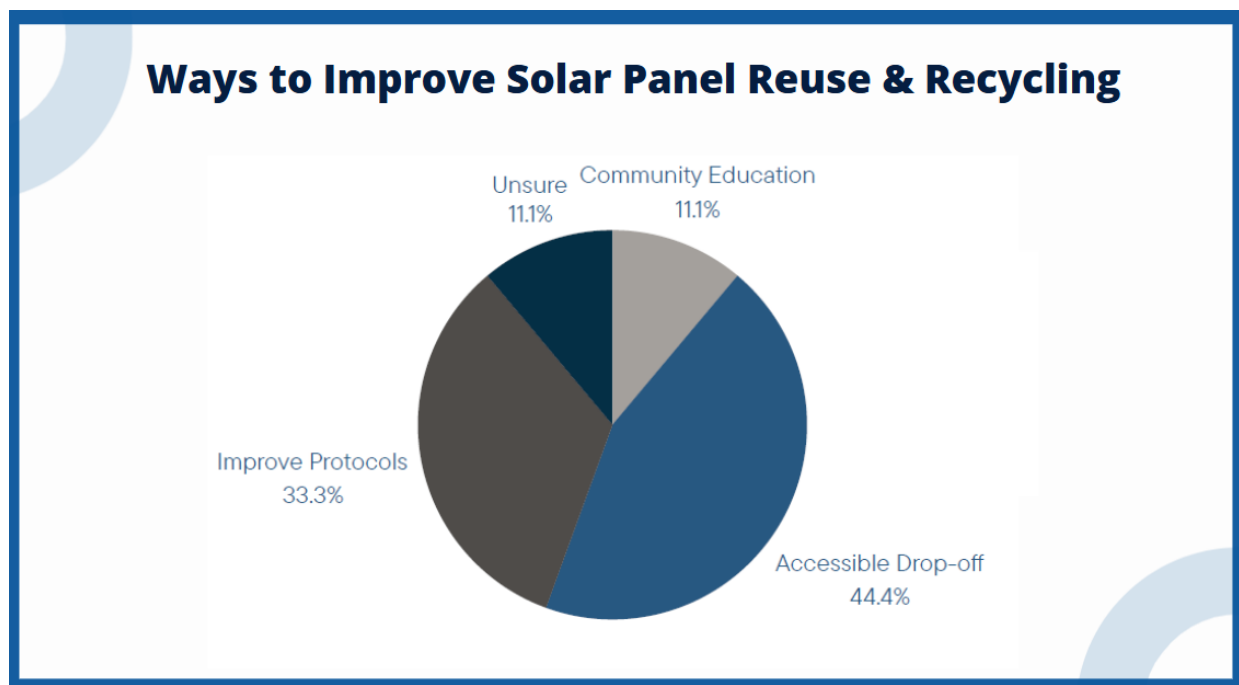
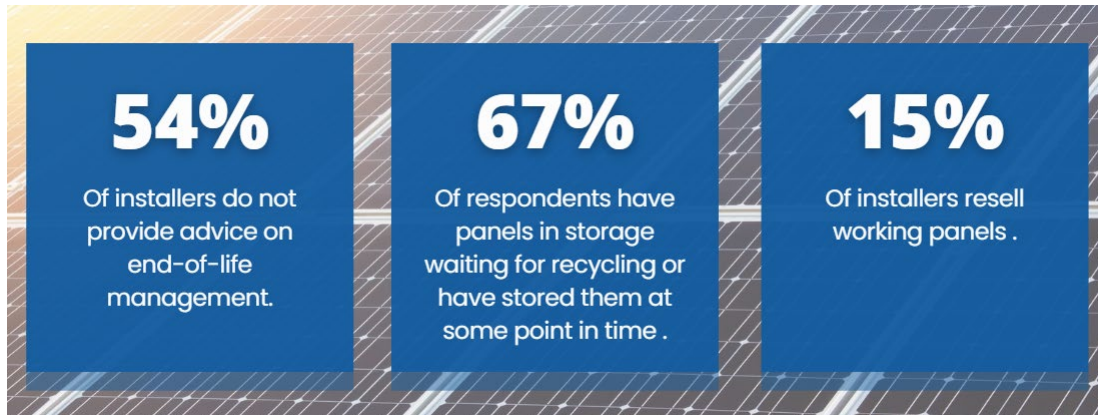
1. Verify panel vendors and provide training.
2. Launch the application and begin promotion for events.
3. Launch Phase II of the education campaign.
4. Verify requests for panel removal and schedule pick-ups.
5. Solar panel workshop.
6. Final report with recommendations for next steps.

Based on reports provided by CPSC, ZWM identified some important findings, which are listed below:



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Data obtained through survey



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Marine Flares Collection Event

On November 3, 2024, Zero Waste Marin hosted a collection event for marine flares at Clipper Yacht Harbor in Sausalito. Marine flares are explosive devices required to be carried on boats over sixteen feet long. These flares provide a similar function to road flares in cases of emergency, but expire every three years and lack convenient disposal options.

ZWM received assistance with contract negotiations for waste collection, transportation, and disposal of the flares from the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC), in addition to outreach development and distribution. As part of outreach initiatives, CPSC and the California State Parks and California Coastal Commission distributed flyers to various yacht clubs and their members in Marin County to promote the proper disposal of marine flares.



*Open only to residents and boaters berthing their boats in the Marin County. Commercial flares not accepted. One free eVDSD per household while supplies last.



Photo from the marine flare event in Sausalito on November 3, 2024.

To decrease transportation costs, ZWM joined a “milk run” collection and transportation strategy with neighboring counties, such as Alameda, West Contra Costa, East Contra Costa, and Del Norte. Clean Harbors was the contractor awarded to accept, transport, and dispose of the marine flares collected during the event.

During this event, 73 participants dropped off their flares, and they received a free, reusable electronic visual distress signaling device (eVDSD) for turning in their marine flares. A total of 1,602 marine flares were collected and weighed 991 lbs.

In fiscal year 24/25, ZWM was awarded a grant by CalRecycle to host an event for the proper disposal of marine flares during fiscal years 24/25 and 25/26. Unfortunately, ZWM won't be able to apply for this grant again until fiscal year 27/28 due to grant terms and conditions.

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Temporary Collection Events in West Marin

ZWM hosted two “Toxic Away Day” events during the 24/25 Fiscal Year. These events are hosted in order to offer easier access to safe, responsible disposal of HHW to residents of West Marin, who are further from the permanent HHW facility in San Rafael. The first event was held in Bolinas on November 9th, 2024, and a subsequent event was held in Point Reyes on May 17th, 2025; both days had 40-60 cars visit to drop off waste. The total amount of waste collected at both events was 12,190 pounds (6.5 Tons).



These events are promoted through two ads in the local newspaper and flyers that are posted at the local fire department, post office, library, stores, and a radio station that targets Spanish speakers in these areas. Zero Waste Marin HHW staff educate residents of Bolinas and Point Reyes during the temporary collection event about proper ways to store common household hazardous waste used by residents, since waste that is not properly stored creates a risk for the environment and may increase disposal costs.

Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Facility

ZWM and Marin Recycling Resource Recovery Association (MRRRA) entered into a new agreement that aligns with relevant government contracts and requirements, reflecting fiscal responsibility by the agency. ZWM has added the acceptance of vape pens at the Permanent HHW facility in San Rafael due to an increase in the use of these devices among Marin residents.

Other HHW Programs Updates

ZWM staff have been working on increasing bilingual education regarding the HHW programs and proper disposal of HHW waste by participating in a radio show for Spanish speakers. During FY 24/25, staff participated in 10 radio shows where HHW topics were discussed for approximately 50 minutes.

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Additionally, relationships with vendors and partners are a cornerstone of ZWM's HHW programs. Staff are pleased to share that these relationships remain strong and positive. The vendors, who assist with the collection of household batteries, bulbs, electronic waste, and certified motor oil and oil filter collection centers, and partners, who support staff with outreach and regulatory compliance, are instrumental to the success of our diverse programs. ZWM values their continued support and collaboration.

Outreach Pilot Programs: FY 24/25

The ZWM Executive Director included funding for “pilot programs” in the FY 24/25 budget to implement and evaluate innovative new programs that could help Marin reduce waste. ZWM staff proposed pilot program ideas, and these ideas were discussed and approved with the JPA Board Program Subcommittee.

Pilot: BYOCup Campaign

ZWM staff proposed to create window decals for businesses to display to remind customers to bring their own reusables. This was inspired by a similar effort by Zero Waste Sonoma to distribute “BYO” window decals. ZWM staff worked with a graphic designer to create initial design options, and then brought the designs to the Local Task Force and jurisdiction sustainability staff for several rounds of feedback. The sustainability manager for the City of Novato suggested co-creating a register counter card that prompts customers to order their food or drink “for here” in case they forgot to bring their own reusables; ZWM worked with their graphic designer to create this material as well. Final design materials are shown below:



ZWM staff then visited 47 businesses across jurisdictions to distribute the window decal and counter card and will continue to visit sites to distribute these materials.

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Left to right: Royal Grounds in San Rafael, Sana'a Café in San Rafael, Equator Coffee in Sausalito.

Pilot: Vape Pen Collection with MCOE and GAIACA

In the fall of 2024, the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) contacted Zero Waste Marin to inquire about the proper method of disposal for the accumulation of vaping devices (vapes) at middle and high schools in Marin. School staff and administrators are required to confiscate vapes when they see students with them, but the vapes were then accumulating at schools due to lack of clarity on how to correctly dispose of them. Vapes are a difficult material to handle because they are comprised of two components: the device itself, which is considered electronic waste due to the battery components, and the liquid nicotine, which is an acutely toxic substance.

The Zero Waste Marin Schools program manager and the HHW program manager met with the Marin County Office of Education and Marin County's CUPA team to discuss options for handling the accumulation of vapes. The Zero Waste Schools Program was able to allocate \$11,000 to properly dispose of the accumulation through a company called GAIACA, which is permitted to haul vape pens in California. The vape accumulation was then collected from 10 school sites in Marin County and disposed of in accordance with regulations. The total collection of vapes was 99 vape pens, weighing 16 pounds. Vape pens vary in weight depending on the battery type and other factors, and can vary from 0.5 ounces – 6 ounces.

Pilot: Repair Fairs with Reuse Alliance

ZWM began working with non-profit Reuse Alliance during the 24/25 Fiscal Year as a pilot program to bring Repair Fairs to jurisdictions across Marin County. At a Repair Fair, community members can bring common household items (lamps, small appliances, bikes, clothing) for free repair. Attendees sit with a Repair Coach who talks them through the fix of their item to demystify repair. Repair Fairs aim to keep useful items out of the landfill and promote a culture of reuse and repair. Seven fairs were hosted in FY 24/25,

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and were received with very positive feedback from community members that attended. An additional three fairs are already planned for FY 25/26, and ZWM will work with Reuse Alliance to bring more fairs to Marin's residents in the next fiscal year.

Some Repair Fairs also include a Clothing Swap component depending on space, where attendees can either drop off clothing in wearable condition, or "shop" for free to find something new to them. People do not need to drop off clothing in order to take clothing home, and are encouraged to take whatever items they will use. Any leftover clothing in usable condition is subsequently donated to a thrift store.

Program Results from FY 24/25:

Fair Date & Location	Attendees	# of Items Fixed	Weight of Items Fixed	Weight of Clothing Donated	CO ₂ e emissions avoided
12/7/24: South Novato Library	50	49	342 lbs	N/A	2,474 kg
2/8/25: Corte Madera Community Center	135	64	344 lbs	135 lbs	2,030 kg
3/8/25: Novato City Hall	160	78	704 lbs	245.5 lbs	2,987 kg
3/15/25: Mill Valley Community Center	95	48	351 lbs	N/A	1,496 kg
4/5/25: Sausalito City Hall	100	63	371.5 lbs	135 lbs	2,007 kg
5/31/25: Pickleweed Community Center	90	62	508 lbs	N/A	2,825 kg
6/28/25: Fairfax Public Library	150	77	757.5 lbs	N/A	3,793 kg
Totals for FY 24/25:	780 attendees	441 items fixed	3,378 lbs of items fixed	516 lbs of clothes donated	17,612 kg of CO₂e emission avoided

Fairs Planned for FY 25/26:

- July 26th: West Marin Elementary School
- August 16th: Marin City Library
- September 13th: San Anselmo Library

Pilot: Reusables at the Farmers Market with Sparkl Reusables

ZWM staff proposed and researched a pilot program to implement reusable foodware with prepared food vendors selling at the Thursday Civic Center Farmers' Market. After researching available vendors, ZWM contracted with Sparkl Reusables to provide

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reusable dishware, collection, and dishwashing services at the market. This project was funded for a three-month pilot program. ZWM collaborated with Sparkl and the Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM) to survey vendors and customers about their opinions on the pilot. As a result of these surveys, ZWM decided to pursue a pilot program with **no** deposit system (where a person would pay a small deposit of \$0.05 - \$2.00 to use a reusable) in order to make the program as accessible as possible.

The reusable pilot program officially launched at the Thursday Civic Center Farmers' Market on January 2nd and ran through March 27th. Sparkl staff were on-site every week to provide education about the program and remind people to return their reusables. Due to the lack of deposit, there was some loss of materials that people did not return, summarized in the table below.

Item	Used	Returned	Lost Items	Return Rate
Green Cups	220	158	62	71.82%
White Cups	74	38	36	51.35%
Containers	226	154	72	68.14%
Plates	69	66	3	95.25%
Lids	249	137	112	55.02%
Sleeves	136	114	22	83.82%
Utensils	41	26	15	63.41%
TOTAL	1015	693	322	68.28%

In total, the pilot program prevented 1,015 single-use products from being used over a three-month period. To view the full report summarizing the results of the pilot, visit:

<https://zerowastemarin.org/resources/>

Outreach Efforts & Community Events

Community Event Attendance

Zero Waste Marin staff attended a total of 24 community events across the County during the 2024/25 Fiscal Year, not including the grocery store tabling efforts. These events included large public events like the Slide Ranch Spring Fling, speaking

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engagements for Rotary Clubs or community groups, and Earth Day Fairs for students and staff at schools.

Zero Waste Marin staff continued to use the “Reusables Pledge” when attending events. Any community member that would like to take home a reusable item such as a ZWM thermos, bag, or compost pail must first fill out the “Reusables Pledge” with how they plan to use the reusable ZWM item to replace single-use items in their lives. This Pledge is intended to help people be mindful about how to use ZWM giveaway items, and to help them commit to reducing single-use items, which is the ultimate purpose for the ZWM giveaways.

24
Events Attended

2,100+
Community
Members
Reached

Grocery Store Tabling

After success and positive feedback on the pilot of grocery store tabling during FY 23/24, Zero Waste Marin staff continued to conduct regular tabling outreach at grocery stores around Marin County. Zero Waste Marin staff completed 17 grocery store visits in 8 jurisdictions across the County during the 24/25 Fiscal Year. Staff gave away reusable produce bags and grocery bags to customers entering the store and discussed the importance of reducing and refusing single-use plastic bags when grocery shopping. Customers were also offered a flyer reminding them of the benefits of bringing reusable bags on one side, with food waste reduction tips on the second side.

Staff had positive interactions with shoppers and reminded them of tips to reduce waste at the point of behavior (right before entering the grocery store).

Zero Waste Marin is excited to continue this direct outreach to have more discussions



ZWM's Climate Corps Fellow Shannon Keane tables outside of the Whole Foods Market in San Rafael.

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with community members and make it a regular feature of the community outreach strategy.

Social Media

Zero Waste Marin continued to post to its Instagram account (@zerowastemarin) and Facebook account (Zero Waste Marin). Instagram was utilized for more fun and informational posts, while Facebook was utilized to share webpages and events. As of the end of the Fiscal Year on June 30, the Zero Waste Marin Instagram had 580 followers (up from 351 followers at the end of last FY). The top locations for followers were San Rafael (10.9%) and Novato (8.5%). The age ranges of followers vary, but the top categories of followers are 35-44 years old (29.2%) and 45-54 years old (23.4%). 78.8% of followers identify as women, while 21.2% identify as men. Launching this Instagram account has allowed Zero Waste Marin to reach a wider audience and get more messages about zero waste out to the community.

The "Beyond the Bin" social media project, proposed and implemented by Zero Waste Marin's Climate Corps Fellow Shannon Keane, aimed to humanize the waste system in Marin County. By spotlighting waste workers through a series of co-created videos and informational newsletters, the project sought to foster a more holistic and empathetic understanding of waste among Marin residents, businesses, educators, and municipal partners. Over a six-month period, Shannon collaborated with the five waste haulers in Marin County to produce 8 tailored Instagram Reels and 3 newsletters. The project successfully delivered compelling content designed to shift public perception and promote greater appreciation for essential waste services.

Template Newsletter and Social Media Blurbs

Per the request of a Board member in a JPA Board meeting, ZWM staff began compiling newsletter blurbs and social media images with captions to provide to all jurisdictions on a monthly basis. The goal of this template content is to make it easy for jurisdictions to integrate zero waste content into their regular communications, and to increase the cohesion of zero waste messaging across the County. The first template content was sent out in November 2024, and ZWM has continued to send out template content at the beginning of each month from January 2025.

Content has included posts about Zero Waste Valentine's Day, Earth Day habit-building tips, how compost is related to pollinator health, and the importance of switching from single-use coffee cups to reusable coffee thermoses to avoid microplastics. ZWM staff send out this template content to 75 recipients, including waste haulers, Local Task Force members, jurisdiction sustainability staff, JPA Board members, city and town clerks or the staffer responsible for the newsletter, and local sustainability groups.

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Spring Campaign: Be a Composting Rock Star

In April 2024, Zero Waste Marin staff released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Marketing & Communications Consulting Support. The RFP requested support from a consultant for drafting community-wide outreach and messaging intended to reach diverse audiences across the County. ZWM evaluated the applications and chose to award Most Likely To, a Bay Area-based marketing firm focused on sustainability. Most Likely To worked with ZWM staff to develop this year's County-wide "call-to-action" campaign focused on composting food scraps.

The theme for this year's call-to-action campaign was "Be a Composting Rock Star". Most Likely To proposed a campaign that focused on fun, short clips or "Reels" for social media that featured singers wearing food costumes and singing about how they belong in the green bin. To go along with this concept, posters in the style of a music festival were designed for bus shelters and other advertisements. Comments and feedback were overwhelmingly positive – social media comments appreciated the clever, creative nature of the campaign and enjoyed the short songs. All five of the short music videos live on the [Composting page of the Zero Waste Marin website](#).

Results of the campaign's tactics are listed below:



Pandora audio ads and banner ads:

Creative	Impressions	Impressions Delivered	Clicks	CTR	R/F
Audio English	537,112	81%			
Banners English	44,963		153	0.34%	
Audio Spanish	101,302	71%			
Banners Spanish	6,132		12	0.20%	
TOTALS	689,509	45.5	165	0.35%	70.1/13X

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Social media ads (Instagram and Facebook):

ENGLISH					
Creative	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Completed Views	Completion Rate
Static	400,717	7,950	1.98%	N/A	N/A
TJ	147,721	3,557	2.41%	2,657	3.35%
Christian	60,569	1,442	2.38%	719	1.66%
Max & Swoon	33,786	717	2.12%	399	2.69%
Suzi	68,131	1,501	2.20%	653	1.37%
TOTALS	710,924	15,167	2.13%	4,428	2.39%
SPANISH					
Creative	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Completed Views	Completion Rate
Static	483,165	3,334	0.69%	N/A	N/A
Gabriel	33,616	633	1.88%	228	2.51%
TOTALS	516,781	3,967	0.77%	228	2.51%

A note on some of the statistics for social media: the click-through rate (CTR) benchmark is 1%, which is generally exceeded here. A “good” video completion rate (the number of people that actually watch the whole video) is 0.6% - 0.7%, and this campaign had a completion rate of 2.39% for English videos and 2.51% for Spanish videos.

Looking Ahead: Goals for FY 25/26

As we prepare for the upcoming fiscal year, we’re excited to build on our current momentum. Our focus will remain on enhancing existing programs while also exploring innovative and convenient ways for the community to safely dispose of electronic and universal waste. We’re committed to working more closely with the Local Task Force and community partners to identify and support new opportunities for waste reduction.

We also plan to expand our programming in FY 25/26, supported in part by grant funding and unspent revenue from FY 24/25. While SB 1383 implementation remains a key priority, we’re also broadening our efforts to include:

- Evaluating disposal practices of toxic and hazardous waste across Marin County
- Advocating for Extended Producer Responsibility
- Increasing our online messaging to promote responsible purchasing and disposal habits

Key Goals for FY 2025–2026:

- **Complete a Classification & Compensation Study**
To better define the unique roles and responsibilities of the Zero Waste Marin team.

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- **Conduct an Organizational Reassessment**
To evaluate how recommendations from the 2021 Organizational Assessment have been implemented and identify areas for improvement.
- **Submit Updated ROWP Target to CalRecycle**
Using data from the newly completed Waste Characterization Study, we will recalculate and submit an updated Recovered Organic Waste Product (ROWP) target for approval.
- **Study E-Cigarette and Vape Pen Disposal**
At the Marin Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility, we'll examine current disposal trends for these emerging waste types.
- **Complete a County-Wide Organics Capacity Study**
To better understand local capacity and identify future needs related to organic waste processing.
- **Develop and Launch a Waste Characterization Work Plan**
Based on recommendations from the completed Waste Characterization Study.
- **Improve HHW Outreach**
We'll enhance our public education and outreach to include more information about household hazardous waste (HHW) and make program details easier to access.
- **Create a County-wide Event Greening Blueprint**
Through a pilot program, we'll establish guidelines to support sustainable practices at local events.
- **Expand Participation in SMART 1383 Tracking**
Encouraging more stakeholders to use and engage with the SMART 1383 recordkeeping