

AGENDA: AB 939 LOCAL TASK FORCE MEETING

DATE Thursday, July 9th, 2026

TIME 10:00am – 11:15am

LOCATION 1600 Los Gatos Drive, Suite 345, San Rafael CA 94903

CALL TO ORDER

1. Open Time for Public Comment (Information Only) 5 Minutes.

CONSENT CALENDAR

2. Approve LTF Meeting Minutes from May 14th, 2026 (Action) - 1 Minute.

REGULAR AGENDA

3. Presentation from Joanne Brasch, California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) – 20 Minutes
 - a. Recommendation: Information Only
4. Presentation from Graduate Program: Contamination Reduction – 20 Minutes
 - a. Recommendation: Information Only
5. Recommendation: Plastic Nursery Pots – 10 Minutes
 - a. Recommendation: Review, Discuss, and Vote
6. Subcommittee Updates - 10 Minutes.
 - a. Recommendation: Information Only
7. Suggested Agenda Items - 2 Minutes.
 - a. Recommendation: Information Only
8. Adjournment

Agendas & Staff Reports also available at <https://zerowastemarin.org/>



For disability accommodations please phone **(415) 473-4381** (Voice), CA Relay 711, or e-mail Zero.Waste@MarinCounty.gov at least five business days in advance of the event. The County will do its best to fulfill requests received with less than five business days' notice. Copies of documents are available in alternative formats, upon request.



MARIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Belvedere Corte Madera County of Marin Fairfax Larkspur Mill Valley
Novato Ross San Anselmo San Rafael Sausalito Tiburon

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT – ITEM 1

TO Local Task Force

FROM Casey Fritz, Senior Planner

SUBJECT Open Time for Public Comment

DATE Thursday, July 9th, 2026

The public is welcome to address the Local Task Force at this time on matters not on the agenda that are within its jurisdiction.

Please be advised that pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2, the LTF is not permitted to discuss or act on any matter not on the agenda unless it determines that an emergency exists, or that there is a need to take immediate action which arose following posting of the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive public comment. Information Only.



MARIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

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APPROVE LTF MEETING MINUTES – ITEM 2

TO Local Task Force

FROM Casey Fritz, Senior Planner

SUBJECT Approve LTF Meeting Minutes from May 14th, 2026

DATE Thursday, July 9th, 2026

Please find attached the Draft Action Minutes from the last meeting on May 14th, 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a motion to receive and file the Action Minutes.

Board Chair: Please confirm the vote on this item by reading the following items out loud after the vote.



MARIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Belvedere Corte Madera County of Marin Fairfax Larkspur Mill Valley
Novato Ross San Anselmo San Rafael Sausalito Tiburon

AGENDA: AB 939 LOCAL TASK FORCE MEETING

DATE Thursday, May 14, 2026

TIME 10:00am – 11:15am

LOCATION 1600 Los Gatos Drive, Suite 210, San Rafael CA 94903

Local Task Force Members Present

Special Districts

Angela Beran, Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Kevin McElroy, Bolinas Public Utilities District

Environmental Organizations

Susan Hopp, Plastic Free Marin

Haulers

Greg Christie, Bay Cities Refuse

Celia Furber, Recology Sonoma-Marin

Public

Deirdre Fennessy, Unincorporated

Chuck Hornbrook, Southern Marin

Justin Wilcock, Marin Sanitary Service

Staff Present

Kimberly Scheibly (Executive Director)

Casey Fritz (Staff)

Justin Newsome (Admin)

Ellie Vendegna (Staff)

Public Non-Members Present:

Dave Biggio, Mill Valley Refuse

CALL TO ORDER

Regular session was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

1. Open Time for Public Comment (Items not on the agenda)

No public comments.

CONSENT CALENDAR

2. Approve LTF Meeting Minutes from March 12th, 2026

Motion to approve the LTF Meeting Minutes from March 12th, 2026

First Justin Wilcock, Marin Sanitary Service

Second Chuck Hornbrook, Southern Marin

Vote Count

Angela Beran: Aye

Casey Poldino: Absent

Kevin McElroy: Aye

Susan Hopp: Aye

Kyle LaRue: Absent

Greg Christie: Aye

Justin Wilcock: Aye

Celia Furber: Aye

Matt McCarron: Absent

Jinesse Reynolds: Absent

Deirdre Fennessy: Aye

Chuck Hornbrook: Aye

Ayes: 8 Noes: 0 Absent: 4 Abstain: 0

Motion passed

3. Update on Deconstruction Outreach Efforts

ZWM staff Ellie Vendegna reported out on the Construction & Demolition (C&D) outreach campaign. Background was provided on the problem with C&D making up 90% of material in the waste stream. Results of the 31 responses were highlighted along with posters, brochure information and key takeaways from building counter visits. ZWM staff Ellie concluded with next step actions. In July 2025, a 5-year plan was submitted by the C&D subcommittee and was adopted by the JPA Board in September 2025.

LTF held a brief discussion

4. Update on Public Meeting Regarding Waste Characterization Study

ZWM Staff Casey Fritz shared the hosting of a public workshop on April 30th. A presentation was given to those who attended with the purpose of breaking down what

the WCS is. Attendees were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and share thoughts and feedback which was recorded by staff for future inclusion.

LTF held a brief discussion

5. Update on SB 54

Executive Director Kimberly Scheibly the agenda from the April 29th SB 54 Regional Executive Director Compliance Coordination workshop. This workshop covered implementation, coordination and the discussions held with CAA. In addition, the current focus on SB 54 is to build transparency, consistency, and end market responsibility. All jurisdictions must collect covered material that is recyclable or compostable by January 1, 2027, as part of the local jurisdiction requirements. Recyclability will be determined by SB 343 and composability is determined by AB 1201.

Supporting member agency compliance and cost reimbursement and consistency improvement are highlighted as StopWaste's objectives and vision. Weigh-in from Santa Clara and Alameda counties jurisdictions were shared along with key discussion points recyclable and compostable materials.

LTF held a brief Q&A

6. Subcommittee Updates

Infrastructure and End Markets reported discussions are landfill capacities with a desire to hear progress updates from the JPA. Solar panel reuse workshop was attended with a lookahead to areas of interest such as tool libraries, smoke detectors and lithium-ion batteries.

Outreach and Education reported no updates.

Construction and Demolition reported no new updates, but meetings are scheduled to discuss outreach.

Note*** *Compliance and Regulation* subcommittee has been discontinued

7. Suggested Agenda Items

The LTF suggested the following future agenda items:

- Next steps on SB 54 / an update from Kim
- Presentation from Nicole Tai at GreenLyx

8. Adjournment

Chair Furber adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.



MARIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

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Board Chair: Please confirm the vote on this item by reading the following items out
aloud after the vote.

Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____

Noes: _____

Abstentions: _____



MARIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

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PRESENTATION FROM JOANNE BRASCH, CALIFORNIA PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL – ITEM 3

TO Local Task Force

FROM Casey Fritz, Senior Planner

SUBJECT Presentation from Joanne Brasch, California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC)

DATE Thursday, July 9th, 2026

The California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) is a powerful network of local governments, non-government organizations, businesses, and individuals supporting policies and projects where producers share in the responsibility for managing problem products at their end of life. CPSC is California's thought leader and expert on Product Stewardship and the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) movement.

CPSC's mission is to shift California's material economy from a linear model that subsidizes resource extraction, including ratepayer-financed collection and disposal, towards a circular economy that relies upon producer-financed and -managed recovery programs with reliable and transparent oversight, while improving the health and well-being of all Californians.

Dr. Joanne Brasch holds a PhD in Textile Economics from the University of California, Davis. She works as Assistant Director at the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) leading projects that promote a circular economy using Product Stewardship and Extended Producer Responsibility.

Dr. Brasch will speak to the Local Task Force about recent efforts at CPSC and their role in the field of waste reduction.

ATTACHMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION

Information Only. Receive and file.



CPSC
California Product
Stewardship Councilsm

Zero Waste Marin Local Task Force Meeting



Hard-to-Manage Materials – Campaigns & Policy

July 9, 2026

Presented By:

Dr. Joanne Brasch,
CPSC's Assistant Director



CPSC Mission and Vision



Mission: To shift California's material economy from a linear model that subsidizes resource extraction, including ratepayer financed collection and disposal, towards a circular economy that relies upon producer-financed and managed recovery programs with reliable and transparent oversight, while improving the health and well-being of all Californians.

Vision: Producers have the primary responsibility to establish, fund, and manage end of life systems for their products with reliable oversight, ensuring accountability and transparency.

CPSC's Product Campaigns



Refuel Your Fun & Save!
Created in 2015



Statewide Textile Recovery
Act Taskforce
Created in 2020 as STRAC
Renamed in 2024



Don't Rush To Flush
Created in 2016



D R Cubed
Created in 2021



Make The Electronic
Marine Flare Switch
Created in 2023

CPSC's Legislative Priorities



Extended Producer Responsibility

CPSC-Sponsored Passed Bills

- Pharma & Sharps (2018)
- Mattress (2019)
- Batteries (2022)
- Textiles (2024)
- Propane Cylinders (2024)

2026 Legislation

- Refrigerants (SB 1010)
- Single-Use Vapes (AB 762)
- Carpet (AB 904)
- Recalled Products (AB 2462) **DEAD**

Refuel Your Fun & \$ave! Campaign



The ReFuel Your Fun & \$ave! (RFYF) campaign developed and administered by CPSC continues to:

- Promote use of reusable 1 lb. propane cylinders in lieu of single-use cylinders
- Reduce waste
- Save local governments & consumers money
- Eliminate the hassle of disposal



Marine Flare Collection in Marin

CPSC has worked with Zero Waste Marin for several years to host marine flare collection events in coordination with jurisdictions along the coast.

Table. Marine Flare Collection Volumes and Costs in Marin County

Year	Number of Flares	Total Cost	Cost Per Flare
2022	1165	\$27,060.25	\$23.23
2024	1602	\$20,672.43	\$12.90
2025	1484	\$25,237.55	\$17.01
2026?	TBD	TBD	TBD



Loose and Embedded Batteries

AB 2440 (Irwin, 2022): The Responsible Battery Recycling Act

Co-Sponsored by CPSC, Californians Against Waste, and Rethink Waste

Description: This bill established extended producer responsibility programs for both single-use and rechargeable batteries – mandating free, convenient collection, recycling targets, public outreach, and manufacturer accountability.

SB 1215 (Newman, 2022): Battery Embedded Products Program

Co-Sponsored by CPSC, Californians Against Waste, and Rethink Waste

Description: This bill expanded the Electronic Waste Recycling Act to include products with embedded batteries, ensuring they enter safe recycling streams rather than the waste stream. SB 1215 is part of an electronic waste program that includes a consumer fee and is managed by the State of California, not a producer responsibility organization (PRO).



The Solar Panel Waste Problem

The average age of removed panels in Marin is **13.2 years old**, leaving **16.8 years of life left**, according to industry standards.

Need reliable, permanent drop-off locations!



Broken/Folded Solar Panels - Image Provided by Larry Sweetser

Limited, affordable disposal/recycling options often leads to:

- **illegal dumping**
- **stockpiling**



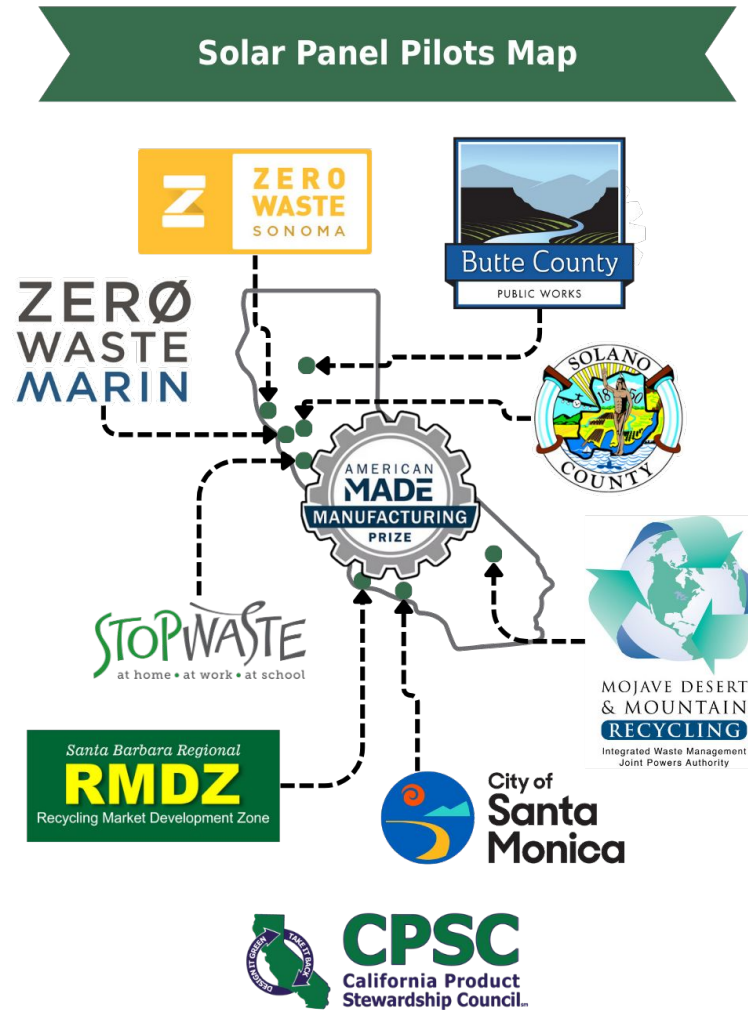
Stack of Solar Panels Awaiting Pick-Up from CCNB at Marin County resident's home – Marin Solar Phase 3

Pilots Programs: Solar Panels

Pilots

CPSC leads several solar reuse and recovery pilots and projects:

1. Installer interviews, consumer surveys, and market research
2. Collection events
3. Repair and reinstallation case studies
4. Public education



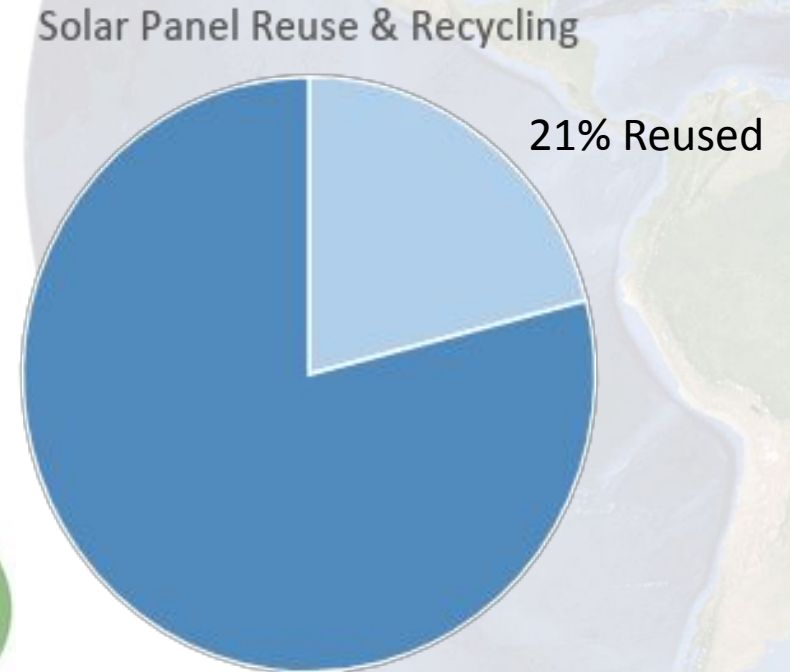
Do you work with used solar panels? Join CPSC's resource map! www.calpsc.org/cpsc-solarstewardship

Zero Waste Marin: Solar Panel Pilot

CPSC has been working with Zero Waste Marin on our solar panel pilot since 2024. After three Phases, the pilot has collected a total of **701 solar panels**.

We work with the **Conservation Corps North Bay** who conducts the solar panel pick-ups.

Recycle1234 tests the panels for reuse and recycles the broken panels.



Reuse Alliance – Solar Panel Case Studies



Microgrid

Obtain used solar panel.

Test the panel using a multimeter.

Acquire a portable power station.

Connect the panels and power station for your own personal microgrid!



Solar Panel Table

Acquire a used solar panel.

Obtain a used table or legs.

Assemble! Clean the solar panel and surface of the desk. Measure both surfaces. Place VHB tape on top of desk. Align solar panel and press.

Don't cut the wires! The solar panel is active and will generate power in the sun.



Solar Panel Reuse – Farm Projects

Agrivoltaics, or “agrisolar,” is the practice of co-locating solar panels and agricultural activities on the same land, allowing for dual use for both renewable energy generation and farming.

A great opportunity for solar panel reuse!



Above (Left): Solar Panel Reuse Project for Electric Fence.

Above (Right): Water Pump. 9/2025 – Solano County.



Above: Solar Panel Reuse Project for Chicken Coop.

4/2026 – Marin County.

CPSC is working on farm solar reuse projects with Solano County and Zero Waste Marin.

Connect with CPSC!

Dr. Joanne Brasch

Assistant Director

Joanne@calpsc.org

www.CalPSC.org



Follow us on:





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PRESENTATION FROM GRAUDATE PROGRAM: CONTAMINATION REDUCTION – ITEM 4

TO Local Task Force

FROM Casey Fritz, Senior Planner

SUBJECT Presentation from Graduate Program: Contamination Reduction

DATE Thursday, July 9th, 2026

Brittany Alana is a member of the Cortes Madera Climate Action Committee and an MBA candidate at the California College of the Arts. Ms. Alana approached Staff Member Fritz to review a policy proposal created as part of an MBA course.

The policy proposal focuses on potential avenues to reduce contamination and increase participation in waste sorting by residents in Marin County. Specifically, the proposal suggests that Marin County amend its franchise agreements with waste haulers and its local implementation of SB 1383 to require the phased adoption of hauler-mounted contamination detection technology, coupled with an automated resident notification and education system.

This is an informational presentation to the Local Task Force; the primary goal is for the Local Task Force to provide feedback about the feasibility of this proposal. If desired, members of the LTF may decide if next steps are relevant.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Policy Proposal: Strengthening SB 1383 Compliance in Marin County Through Smart Hauler Technology and Resident Education Feedback
2. Presentation Slide Deck: Contamination Reduction

RECOMMENDATION

Information Only. Receive and file.

April 24, 2026

The Honorable Members of the Marin County Board of Supervisors

Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste Management Joint Powers Authority

Zero Waste Marin

Marin County Civic Center

3501 Civic Center Drive

San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: Policy Proposal: Strengthening SB 1383 Compliance in Marin County Through Smart Hauler Technology and Resident Education Feedback

Dear Supervisors and JPA Members,

We write to you as engaged Marin County residents and community members who care deeply about the long-term sustainability of our county, the health of our local environment, and the financial well-being of our neighbors. Marin has long distinguished itself as a leader in environmental stewardship, and today we ask that you take that leadership a step further: not by penalizing residents, but by empowering them. We respectfully submit the following proposal to strengthen local implementation of SB 1383, California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Reduction Act, by integrating modern hauler-mounted camera technology into Marin's waste collection system to deliver real-time, personalized education directly to residents.

I. The Problem: Good Intentions, Persistent Confusion

Marin County residents are, by most measures, more committed to recycling and composting than the average California community. And yet, contamination of our compost and recycling streams remains a persistent challenge: not because residents don't care, but because the system makes it difficult to do the right thing.

In June 2025, Zero Waste Marin published the results of a physical waste characterization study conducted by SCS Engineers, based on 80 hand-sorted samples collected from every sector of Marin's waste stream over two weeks in late 2024 and early 2025. The findings are striking: 60 percent of the material currently going to Redwood Landfill could be diverted through programs already available in the county. Of that divertible material, 35 percent is compostable, with food waste alone representing nearly a quarter of everything Marin sends to landfill.

The table below places these findings in context against state and national benchmarks:

	Diversion / Divertibility Rate	Source
Marin County (landfill stream divertible)	~60%	SCS Engineers Waste Characterization Study, June 2025
Marin County (overall diversion estimate)	~65%	Zero Waste Marin internal estimate
California statewide recycling/composting	~42%	CalRecycle Annual Report, 2020
U.S. national average	~32%	U.S. EPA, 2018

The ten most common materials found in Marin’s landfill stream, as identified in the 2025 Waste Characterization study, tell a clear story:

Rank	% of Stream	Material	Classification
1	20.8%	Mixed Residue/Other	Other Material
2	10.0%	Not Donatable Food (non-meat)	Compostable
3	8.3%	Inedible Food (bones, peels, shells)	Compostable
4	7.1%	Other Compostable Paper	Compostable
5	7.0%	Nonrecyclable Plastic Film	Other Material
6	4.7%	Mixed Paper	Divertible
7	3.2%	Paper/Fiber Food Service Ware	Other Material
8	3.2%	Cloth and Clothing	Potentially Divertible
9	2.1%	Potentially Donatable Produce	Compostable
10	1.8%	Remainder/Composite Plastic	Other Material

Three of the top four materials by weight are compostable food. Food waste is the single largest recoverable category in Marin’s landfill stream, and the commercial sector drives the highest concentrations: 25.2 percent of commercial waste is food, compared to 22.2 percent in single-family residential. The Waste Characterization study (WCS) specifically recommends that Zero Waste Marin focus outreach and education on food scrap diversion in the commercial sector as the highest-impact available intervention.

The fifth largest material in Marin’s landfill stream is nonrecyclable plastic film at 7.0 percent, and this number points directly to one of the most confusing problems residents face. Products sold at Marin grocery stores labeled “compostable” or “biodegradable” cannot, in fact, be composted here. The WM EarthCare facility at Redwood Landfill does not accept these materials. Compostable plastics take significantly longer to break down than natural organic material, and their presence in the compost stream jeopardizes the facility’s organic certification: the certification that allows Marin Homegrown Compost to be sold for use on organic farms.

The numbers bear this out. Marin Sanitary Service’s 2022 route audits found that 30 percent of inspected containers had prohibited contaminants. In 2023, the hauler recorded over 5,400 separate contamination intervention actions across residential and commercial accounts. The most common offender: non-recyclable and misidentified plastics, including the “compostable” bags that residents are buying in good faith at local grocery stores.

Marin's own waste haulers: Marin Sanitary Service, Mill Valley Refuse Service, Recology Sonoma Marin, and Tamalpais Community Services District: have all acknowledged the problem. Residents are, as one hauler representative put it, "understandably confused." The confusion is real, it is widespread, and it is not the residents' fault. The products are legally sold in our stores, labeled as environmentally responsible.

This problem is compounded by the fact that each of Marin's four residential waste haulers maintains slightly different sorting rules. The absence of a unified, simple standard: combined with a retail environment that actively misleads well-meaning residents: undermines the goals of SB 1383 despite our community's sincere best efforts.

II. The Urgency: A Landfill With a Finite Horizon

The stakes of getting waste sorting right are not abstract. Redwood Landfill: the only active solid waste disposal site in Marin County, located near Novato and in operation since 1958: is a finite resource. Currently permitted to accept up to 2,310 tons of material daily, the facility's permitted design capacity of 26.1 million cubic yards gives it a finite runway. At current disposal rates, independent projections place potential closure somewhere between 2045 and 2055: a horizon that affects a large majority of current residents. That window narrows with every ton of contaminated material that bypasses diversion and goes straight to the landfill face.

The 2025 WCS found that 60% of what Marin currently sends to landfill could be diverted through available programs. Applied to the 100,911 tons of waste collected annually across all franchised haulers, that represents approximately 60,500 tons per year of material that does not need to reach Redwood Landfill: material that is accelerating the facility's closure timeline every single collection day. When Redwood closes, Marin County's trash will need to travel significantly farther for disposal. Transportation costs will increase. Greenhouse gas emissions from long-haul waste transport will rise. And the financial burden on every Marin household and business, through dramatically higher garbage rates, will be substantial.

The Board of Supervisors is already grappling with rising waste rates. A proactive, education-centered contamination reduction program is not just environmentally sound but a direct fiscal investment in extending the lifespan of Redwood Landfill and delaying the steep costs that will accompany its eventual closure.

There is a second fiscal risk this Board should be aware of: CalRecycle began formal SB 1383 enforcement in January 2024, and jurisdictions with inadequate contamination monitoring programs are exposed to penalties of up to \$10,000 per day per violation: with multiple California jurisdictions already having received Notices of Violation. A proactive contamination detection program is not only good policy; it is the most direct available defense against enforcement action. Marin has made substantial efforts toward SB 1383 compliance, but persistent contamination in our organic stream, documented in our own haulers' annual reports and confirmed by the 2025 WCS, represents an ongoing vulnerability that this proposal directly addresses.

We are not yet in crisis: but we must act now.

III. The Proposal: Smart Cameras + Resident Feedback = Behavioral Change

We propose that Marin County amend its franchise agreements with waste haulers and its local implementation of SB 1383 to require the phased adoption of hauler-mounted contamination detection

technology, coupled with an automated resident notification and education system modeled after the utility billing experience residents already know.

A. The Technology: 3rd Eye Contamination Detection

Technology platforms such as 3rd Eye (3rdeyecam.com) already offer commercial-grade, route-level contamination detection solutions designed specifically for the refuse industry. Using cameras mounted on collection vehicles, 3rd Eye's system passively captures images of bin contents at the moment of pickup, automatically identifies contamination, and associates the contamination event with the specific account or address: all without requiring any manual inspection or driver action.

The platform also offers Positive Service Verification (PSV), which can document both compliant and non-compliant bins, creating an evidentiary record that is fair, transparent, and verifiable by the resident. This is not speculative technology: it is being deployed today by waste haulers across the country, and it integrates with existing route management and billing systems.

B. The Feedback Loop: The “Sorting Report”

We propose the creation of a monthly “Sorting Report”: a resident-facing document delivered alongside or integrated into the existing trash bill: that provides each household with:

- Photo documentation of any identified contamination events during the prior billing cycle
- Plain-language explanation of what was wrong and why it matters (e.g., “Compostable plastic bags cannot be accepted at WM EarthCare and will contaminate the organic compost stream”)
- Simple, specific guidance on correct disposal of the offending item
- A compliance score or summary reflecting the household's sorting performance over time
- For repeat or egregious contamination: an escalating schedule of modest fees, with all fee revenue directed exclusively toward resident education, outreach, and program administration

This model mirrors the experience residents already have with utility bills: PG&E and Marin Clean Energy both provide household-level usage data, comparisons to neighbors, and personalized efficiency tips. Research consistently shows that specific, timely, and personalized feedback is far more effective at driving behavioral change than general outreach campaigns. The Sorting Report applies the same behavioral science to waste sorting.

C. Education First, Fees Second

This proposal is not designed to punish residents. Marin's residents are already more compliant than most California communities. The goal is to close the knowledge gap for those who want to do the right thing but have been failed by confusing product labeling, inconsistent hauler rules, and a lack of timely, specific feedback.

We recommend the following tiered approach:

1. Year 1: Education Only. Contamination events trigger informational Sorting Reports only. No fees. Residents receive photo evidence, explanation, and guidance. Haulers, the JPA, and Zero Waste Marin use aggregate data to identify the most common contamination types and direct outreach resources accordingly.
2. Year 2: Warning Phase. Repeat contamination (3 or more events in 6 months) triggers a formal written warning and a dedicated outreach call or visit from Zero Waste Marin.
3. Year 3 and beyond: Modest Fee Phase. Persistent, documented contamination by households that have received multiple warnings may trigger modest, escalating fees. All fees are capped, publicly disclosed in the franchise agreement, and revenue-neutral (directed to program costs only).

We also recommend that the County pursue a parallel track of advocacy to the California Legislature and CalRecycle to require stronger and more accurate labeling of “compostable” products at the point of sale: including mandatory disclosure of whether the product is accepted at local composting facilities. Residents should not have to be experts to make the right choice at the grocery store.

IV. Implementation Path

We recognize that implementation requires coordination among the JPA, individual hauler franchise agreements, Zero Waste Marin, and the County. We respectfully suggest the following steps:

1. Direct the JPA and County DPW to issue a Request for Information (RFI) to contamination detection technology vendors, including but not limited to 3rd Eye, to assess readiness, cost, and integration timelines.
2. Direct Zero Waste Marin to convene a working group of haulers, residents, and sustainability staff to design the Sorting Report format and education protocol.
3. Amend franchise agreement renewal negotiations to include contamination detection technology as a required component, with a phased deployment schedule. We anticipate that haulers may raise concerns about cost, workflow integration, and liability: these are legitimate operational questions that the RFI process in Step 1 is designed to answer. Importantly, this is not an untested mandate: WM has already integrated its Smart Truck® camera system into franchise agreements with the cities of Chino Hills and Lodi under SB 1383, and Peninsula Sanitary Service: a Bay Area hauler of comparable scale to Marin’s operators: negotiated a 10-year contract with Stanford University that included AMCS Vision AI camera technology as a contractual requirement. Franchise integration of this technology is an established negotiation precedent, not a novel ask. The County and JPA should approach these negotiations from that position of strength.
4. Direct County Counsel to assess the legal framework for a modest contamination fee structure, modeled on existing litter and nuisance abatement codes.
5. Request that CalRecycle provide guidance or grant funding for technology-assisted SB 1383 compliance programs, for which this initiative may qualify under existing noncompetitive grant programs.
6. Instruct the JPA to engage with state legislators to address the labeling of compostable plastics at the point of sale, closing the gap between what residents are told by manufacturers and what our local facilities can actually accept.

Projected Program Impact

The following projections are anchored to the 2025 WCS baseline of 100,911 tons collected annually across Marin’s five franchised haulers, with a modest 1% annual population growth rate. The divertible material figure reflects the study’s physical sort finding that 60% of Marin’s landfill stream is recoverable through existing programs.

Indicator	2025 Baseline	2036 WITH Program	2036 WITHOUT Program
Daily intake (tons)	2,310	2,552	2,552
Divertible material in landfill stream	60%	~35%	~65%+
Annual GHG emissions	337K tons	84K tons (↓ 75%)	396K tons (↑ 17%)
Annual disposal cost	—	–\$46.5M saved	+\$31.8M added

V. Conclusion

Marin County has an extraordinary opportunity to lead the country in this innovative initiative. We have a population that is motivated, an infrastructure that is already among the best in California, and a compelling local reason to act: a finite landfill whose remaining life is measured in decades, not centuries.

The 2025 Zero Waste Marin waste characterization study makes the case with a clarity we have never had before: 60% of what we send to landfill today does not need to go there. Three of the top four materials in Marin’s landfill stream are compostable food. The path forward is not more infrastructure: it is better information, delivered at the right moment to the right household.

The technology exists today to give residents what they have never had before: a direct, timely, visual feedback loop that tells them exactly what they did right and what they did wrong: the same week it happened, not months later in a general brochure. Pair that with a clear, fair, and transparent accountability structure, and we believe Marin can meaningfully extend the life of Redwood Landfill, reduce contamination in our organic and recycling streams, and set a model that communities across California can follow.

The cost of inaction is not zero: it is a future of dramatically higher trash rates, out-of-county disposal, and a missed window to change behavior while it is still easy and affordable to do so. We urge you to act now, while we still have the luxury of choosing an educational approach rather than a crisis response.

We ask this Board to direct the JPA to initiate the RFI process outlined in Section IV: a bounded, low-cost first step that carries no commitment beyond gathering the information needed to act wisely. The window for an educational approach is open now; Redwood Landfill’s finite capacity, CalRecycle’s active enforcement posture, and the documented contamination in our own haulers’ annual reports and the 2025 SCS Engineers study together make the case that waiting is the more expensive choice.

We are prepared to present this proposal in person at the Board’s earliest convenience and to work alongside Zero Waste Marin, our haulers, and County staff to move from proposal to pilot. We welcome the opportunity to engage with each member of this Board, with hauler representatives, and with Zero Waste Marin staff as this initiative develops.

Thank you for your time, your continued service to this community, and your leadership on the environmental issues that define Marin County’s character.

Respectfully submitted,

[Your Name(s)]

[Address, Marin County, CA]

[Phone / Email]

Attachments and Resources Referenced

- SCS Engineers / Zero Waste Marin: Waste Characterization Study Report (June 2025):
<https://zerowastemarin.org>
- 3rd Eye Contamination Detection: <https://www.3rdeyecam.com/solution/contamination-detection/>
- Zero Waste Marin: Composting in Marin (compostable plastics guidance):
<https://zerowastemarin.org/composting-in-marin/>
- Marin Sanitary Service: Curbside Composting Guide:
<https://marinsanitaryservice.com/curbside-composting-guide/>
- Redwood Landfill & Recycling Center (WM):
<https://www.wm.com/us/en/facilities/redwood-landfill-and-recycling-center>
- CalRecycle: SB 1383 Implementation: <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/Organics/SLCP/>
- Cal Cities: SB 1383 Education and Outreach Requirements:
<https://www.calcities.org/advocacy/policy-areas-and-committees/environmental-quality/sb-1383-implementation>
- Marin County: SB 1383 Ordinance (2022):
<https://publicworks.marincounty.gov/county-to-support-statewide-food-waste-mandate/>

The Sorting Report

A smarter path to waste diversion

 MARIN COUNTY

Corte Madera

Climate Action Committee

Brittany Klipper, Devika M, Devika B

60%

of what Marin sends to
landfills shouldn't be there





60%

of what Marin sends to
landfills shouldn't be there

60%
is recoverable

divertable, compostable
or recyclable

35%
is compostable organics



single largest opportunity

24%
is food (compostable)

highest-impact single
category

Why this matters?



Redwood Landfill closes between 2045 and 2055

Marin’s trash travels farther – rates go up for every household and business



SB 1383 penalties started January 2024

Up to \$10,000/day (combined cap across violations.) Our contamination data now on record.



Every ton we divert extends the runway and reduces costs

Annual impact, 2036	Moderate	Strong
Waste diverted from Redwood	15,100 tons	30,300 tons
Organics diverted	8,900 tons	17,800 tons
GHG emissions avoided	~5,300 t CO ₂ e	~10,500 t CO ₂ e
Landfill fees avoided	~\$2.1M / yr	~\$4.3M / yr

Scenarios: program captures 25% (moderate) to 50% (strong) of recoverable material by 2036. Sources: SCS Engineers 2025 (100,911 tons/yr; 60% recoverable; 35% compostable) * CARB compost method (0.44-0.62 t CO₂/ ton organics) * WM Redwood Landfill gate rate \$141.41/ton (Oct 2025) * Flat tonnage assumed (US Census: Marin population declining '0.5%/yr since 2021)

The System is the problem.

Five haulers, five sets of rules

Marin has five residential waste haulers. Each has slightly different sorting requirements. There's no unified standard.



“Compostabel” Labeling confusion

Products sold throughout Marin labeled "compostable" cannot actually be composted at WM EarthCare. They contaminate the organic stream and threaten the facility's organic certification.



No feedback loop

When someone sorts incorrectly, nothing tells them. Marin Sanitary Service recorded 5,400+ contamination interventions in 2023 — but residents rarely knew they'd made a mistake.



The Proposal

Two components. Both already proven elsewhere.

Smart Hauler Cameras



- Cameras mount on collection vehicles
- Capture bin contents at moment of pickup
- Automatically flag contamination
- Link each event to the specific address
- No manual inspection — no driver action required

The Sorting Report



- Monthly report alongside the trash bill
- Photo evidence of any contamination
- Plain-language explanation of what went wrong
- Specific guidance on correct disposal
- Household compliance score over time

Smart Hauler Cameras



- Cameras mount on collection vehicles
- Capture bin contents at moment of pickup
- Automatically flag contamination
- Link each event to the specific address
- No manual inspection — no driver action required

City of Tacoma's Solid Waste Management Launches Smart Camera Pilot to Reduce Contamination in Recycling

Friday August 01, 2025



What Prairie Robotics told us



Our closest Bay Area precedent

82% of residents improved with **two postcards or fewer**



Sam Dietrich
CEO, Prairie Robotics



Scale & maturity

50+ cities across the US and Canada. Six years old. Purpose-built AI hardware (the same chips in Meta and Google data centers), not old cameras with AI bolted on.



The pattern holds

Recycling contamination runs 10–30% ($\approx 17\%$ average). But 82% of residents self-correct fast; the stubborn last chunk drives half of all contamination.



A better carrot

Regina, SK enters clean-sorting residents in a draw to win back their $\sim \$284/\text{yr}$ fee. Frames the program as giving money back, not penalizing — strong public messaging.



Billing: today vs. tomorrow

Contamination billing is live on the commercial side now. Residential billing integration is still emerging — our education-first design fits where the tech actually is.

Livermore presents its results at the CA Refuse & Recycling Association in August 2026.

Postcard

During our recent collection

We found items in your cart that are not recyclable:



Keep these out:



Bagged Recyclables



Plastic Bags



Batteries

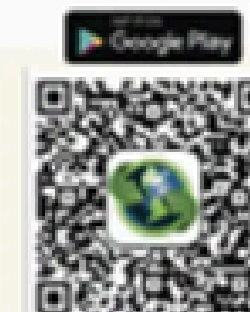


Tangles



www.scrrra.org
860-381-5558
7 Hurlbutt RD
Gales Ferry, CT 06335

Download the app to learn
"What Goes Where"!



The Sorting Report

- Monthly report alongside the trash bill
- Photo evidence of any contamination
- Plain-language explanation of what went wrong
- Specific guidance on correct disposal
- Household compliance score over time

 SMARTCITY WASTE SOLUTIONS

THIRD-EYE TECHNOLOGY: INCIDENT & BILLING REPORT

Account Holder

John Doe

Service Address

415 Maple Avenue

Service Date

October 26, 2023

Bin Type

Grey (General Landfill)

Third Eye Score

035 / 100

Summary of Infraction

Your service today resulted in a "Critical" Third Eye Score. The automated optical scanner detected severe contamination within your landfill bin. High-value recyclables were mixed with residual waste, increasing community processing costs.

Optical Evidence: Image Analysis

25%



DETECTED CONTAMINANTS

Violation: High-Value Resource Disposal

The system flagged clean corrugated cardboard and water bottles. These items are 100% recyclable but were sent to the landfill stream.

FOOD WASTE 75%



PLASTIC (MIXED) 25%

Violation: Cross-Contamination

A plastic bag containing metal soda cans was found buried under food waste. This prevents mechanical sorting and damages recycling equipment.

Billing Calculation

Total Cost = Base Fee + (Processing Surcharge x Contamination Factor)

Description	Base Cost	Factor	Total Fee
General Collection	\$12.00	1x	\$12.00
Poor Segregation Surcharge	\$5.00	9x	\$45.00
			Total This Cycle: \$57.00

How to improve your score: Ensure all recyclables are Empty, Rinsed, and Dry, and never bag your recyclables in the blue/green streams.

This is an automated report generated by Third-Eye Optical Sensors. To dispute this charge, please visit the Municipal Waste portal within 48 hours.



Think: your PG&E bill — but for sorting.

Specific

Timely

Personal

Education first

Fees only if needed.

Year 1

Education Only

- Contamination events trigger Sorting Reports only
- No fees — just information
- Aggregate data directs outreach priorities
- Food waste and compostable plastic labeling are top focus

Year 2

Warning Phase

- 3+ contamination events in 6 months = formal warning
- Dedicated outreach call or visit from Zero Waste Marin
- No fees yet — escalated personal engagement

Year 3

Modest Fee Phase

- Only persistent, documented violations after multiple warnings
- Fees are capped, publicly disclosed, and revenue-neutral
- All proceeds go to education and outreach

Five concrete asks.

- 1 Direct **Zero Waste Marin JPA** to formally consider this proposal and recommend it to member jurisdictions.
 - 2 Convene a **working group of haulers, jurisdiction staff, and residents** to design the Sorting Report format and shared technology standards.
 - 3 **Incorporate contamination detection technology** requirements into the next franchise agreement renewals — **specifying performance expectations**, not a specific vendor.
 - 4 Engage **CalRecycle** for guidance and potential grant funding for technology-assisted SB 1383 compliance programs.
 - 5 **Support AB 1812 and monitor SB 54 rule-making** to address root-cause labeling confusion around compostable products.
- 

The opportunity is here.
The data is ready.
Now we act.

**Marin already leads
California in diversion.**

**This is how we close the gap
between where we are and
where we could be —**

**Not with more awareness
campaigns,**

**but with timely, personal,
specific information that
empowers every resident to
get it right.**

60%

of landfill waste is
recoverable today



The feedback
technology exists
and is deployable
now



Education first —
fees only for
persistent,
documented
violations



Extended landfill life
+ lower future rates
for all of Marin



The Horizon

California's SB 54
(Extended Producer
Responsibility) is being
written now.

British Columbia has run
EPR for 20+ years with a
5% contamination cap
tied to rebates.

MARIN CAN BE READY!

What it costs, and what offsets it

Annual cost component	Low	High
On-truck camera systems (~40–60 trucks)	\$250K	\$750K
Sorting Report printing & mailing	\$100K	\$300K
Program staff & administration (shared)	\$75K	
County-wide total, per year	~\$425K	~\$1.25M

\$2–4M /YR

Avoided system-wide disposal costs

Tons diverted from the landfill in 2036: ~15,100 (moderate) to ~30,300 (strong).

Redwood Landfill gate rate: \$141.41/ton (WM's posted October 2025 fee schedule).

GRANT-ELIGIBLE (!)

Tacoma fully EPA-funded (\$1.8M); Bay City state-funded (\$50K+)

*First-year setup runs higher due to one-time hardware installation.

Even at the high end, avoided disposal fees roughly cover the cost — before counting avoided state penalties, grant funding, or cleaner-commodity value.



Food for thought.
Compost for growth.

Appendix: Five haulers, three different systems

Hauler	Territory	Recycling system	Notable differences
Marin Sanitary Service	San Rafael, Larkspur, Fairfax, San Anselmo, Ross	Dual-stream split cart: paper one side, containers the other, 4 carts total	Won't empty contaminated carts; rigid "bottles, tubs, jugs" plastics only; cardboard bundled 2'x2'x2'
Mill Valley Refuse	Mill Valley, Corte Madera, Tiburon, Belvedere, So. Marin	Dual-stream split cart: paper one side, containers the other, 4 carts total	Manual cart emptying with 60-lb limit; cardboard bundled 3'x3'x1' — different spec than MSS
Recology Sonoma Marin	Novato, West Marin (Stinson, Bolinas)	Single-stream: one blue cart, all recyclables together	Operates own MRF; paper bags OK as compost liners, no plastic or bioplastic bags
Bay Cities Refuse	Sausalito, Marin City	Single-stream commingled blue cart — "no need to separate"	Green waste processed in Richmond (Contra Costa) — different facility than other haulers; semiannual special pickups
Tamalpais CSD	Tam Valley	Single-stream, three carts	Only district in Marin hauling its own waste; 65-gal-only recycling/compost carts; bills via property taxes

Sources: Zero Waste Marin "How Recyclables are Handled in Marin County" • hauler websites, retrieved June 2026.

The one rule that IS consistent county-wide: every hauler sends "compostable" bioplastics to the trash — WM EarthCare's compost would lose its OMRI organic certification otherwise. The conflict isn't between haulers; it's between all five haulers and the product labels on store shelves.



MARIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Belvedere Cortes Madera County of Marin Fairfax Larkspur Mill Valley
Novato Ross San Anselmo San Rafael Sausalito Tiburon

RECOMMENDATION: PLASTIC NURSERY POTS – ITEM 5

TO Local Task Force

FROM Casey Fritz, Senior Planner

SUBJECT Recommendation: Plastic Nursery Pots

DATE Thursday, July 9th, 2026

The Infrastructure & End Markets Subcommittee has developed a formal recommendation for Zero Waste Marin staff pertaining to plastic nursery pots.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Recommendation: Plastic Nursery Pots
2. Slide Deck: Plastic Nursery Pots

RECOMMENDATION

Action. Discuss the recommendation, make suggested changes as relevant, and make a motion to direct staff on next steps.



Local Task Force Recommendation to Zero Waste Marin JPA Board

Recommendation Title:	Plastic Nursery Pot Reuse and Recycling Strategy
Recommending Subcommittee:	Infrastructure and End Markets
Prepared By:	The Team

Description of Recommended Action or Program:

I. Problem Statement

It is estimated that the 500 million plastic plant pots, trays, and flats produced annually in the United States generate 350 million pounds (175,000 tons) of plastic waste.¹ The management of plastic plant nursery pots represents a significant gap in the current waste diversion strategy for Marin County.

Key Market/Diversion challenges:

1. **Current Inconsistency in Service:** Without a unified county-wide approach on reuse and recycling, overall residential disposal depends on individual hauler policies or retailer-specific programs that may not be well-publicized or reliable. For example, haulers in Novato and Sausalito allow for the recycling of the black nursery plastic pots whereas in other jurisdictions this is not the case and they are sent to the landfill.
2. **Markets/Execution:** There is a lack of clear market demand or established means for the safe, consistent reuse and recycling of these specific plastics in Marin. These challenges are widespread: black plastic is often economically volatile and difficult for standard recycling equipment (which uses Near-Infrared technology) to detect, resulting in it being rejected and sent to landfills nationally; mixed materials are used to create these plastic containers; and the lack of recyclers willing to receive these types of containers.

¹ <https://ecori.org/horticulture-industrys-problematic-pot-addiction/>

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3. **Significant Divertable Waste in Marin Waste Characterization Study:** Plastics including from High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE #2) Colored Containers or Polypropylene (PP #5) Containers are part of the group of “plastics” representing almost 15% ² of the identifiable waste in the 2025 ZWM Waste Characterization Study, representing a divertable opportunity for ZWM.
4. **Covered under SB 54:** Nursery pots are identified under CalRecycle's official Covered Material Categories (CMCs) Reporting Guidance as primary single-use plastic packaging and subject to the rules of SB 54.³
5. **Timing:** Typically, planting is done in high volume in the March-June time frame and growers need the nursery pots in the late fall and winter, creating a potential storage cost issue that program development should be sensitive to.
6. **Not best in class** - Stop Waste, part of Alameda County, has a fantastic website resource ([link](#)) providing information to residents on who takes back the nursery pots. Zero Waste Marin could develop a similar website, with bilingual options, for our community.

Environmental Challenges of Plastic Nursery Pots

Most rigid nursery pots are manufactured from High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE #2) or Polypropylene (PP #5). Because they are designed to be weather-resistant and UV-stabilized to protect plant roots, they take an estimated 450 years to break down in a standard landfill environment. This creates a massive, permanent consumption of localized landfill airspace.

In addition to taking up landfill airspace there are of course the environmental impacts of a petroleum based product from extraction, creation and post consumer disposal including soil alteration, microplastic fragmentation, and chemical leaching. The industry and environmental community have spent time reviewing different solutions and their impacts as well. ⁴ To paraphrase a conclusion from *Moving Toward Sustainability with Alternative*, the community should consider **greater reuse and recycling** of plastic products as well as exploring the use of containers made of

²https://zerowastemarin.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/FINAL_ZWM-WCS-Report_SCS-Engineers_6-2025.pdf, table 1

³ <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/packaging/packaging-epr/cmclist/>

⁴ <https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/uploads/535/78629/Wang.pdf>

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alternative materials.⁵ For ZWM, diverting materials from going to the landfill is paramount, therefore exploring greater reuse and recycling should be pursued.

II. Market Forces – Demand, Supply and Planting

The seasonality of the horticultural cycle creates structural supply-and-demand. A successful recovery program must balance/demonstrate insight into the spring consumer "discard peak" against the late-summer commercial "potting peak."

When Consumers Generate Waste

March – June: The Spring Peak (Highest Influx)

This is the absolute critical window for collection infrastructure.

- **The Dynamic:** Consumers flood retail nurseries to buy spring annuals, vegetable starts, perennials, and shrubs. These plants are typically in the ground within 48 hours of purchase, leaving the consumer with a stack of empty pots.
- **Volume:** Reviewing US economic historical raw data for NAICS 4442 (Lawn and Garden Equipment and Supplies Retailers), it shows an extreme seasonal curve. Sales in March, April, May, and June routinely account for roughly 60% to 70% for total sales, correlating to a similar waste stream for this material given potted plants' short shelf life (e.g. plants are not laundry detergent). With the more mild climate, this number is likely closer to 60%, where in colder climates it may even exceed 70%.
- **Recovery Action:** Increase the frequency of collection bin pick-ups at local nurseries or recycling depots. This is also the best time for marketing pushes (e.g., "Bring Back Your Spring Pots").

September – November: The Fall Planting Bump (Moderate Influx)

California and many temperate parts of the US experience a secondary planting season in autumn.

- **The Dynamic:** Fall is the optimal time for planting California natives, winter vegetables, spring-blooming bulbs, and larger specimen trees because the cooler air and upcoming winter rains allow roots to establish.
- **Volume:** This time period represents the next largest amount of planting activity with gardeners predominately using 1-gallon and 5-gallon tree tubs during this

⁵ <https://journals.ashs.org/view/journals/horttech/25/1/article-p8.xml>

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window based on planting needs and favorable rain window in the upcoming months.

When Commercial Growers Need Pots

A recovery program should aim to supply empty pots back to local commercial growers or native plant restoration nurseries; the *distribution* schedule must align with their potting timelines. Growers need containers **months before** the plants actually appear in retail stores.

June – August: Summer Propagation & Potting Up

- **The Demand:** Growers are taking cuttings, dividing perennials, and "potting up" small seedlings into 1-gallon and 5-gallon containers so they can grow out over the winter for the following spring.
- **Recovery Action:** This is a key delivery window. Growers want bulk quantities of 1-gallon and 5-gallon pots right now.

October – January: Bare-Root and Liner Potting

- **The Demand:** This is when wholesale nurseries receive "bare-root" stock (fruit trees, roses, deciduous shade trees) and small "liner" plugs from specialized propagation facilities. They must pot these immediately into containers so they can leaf out by spring.
- **Recovery Action:** High demand from tree and shrub growers for larger tree tubs (5-gallon to 15-gallon) and deep-cell native plant plugs.

Summary for Program Management

To maximize the efficiency of a nursery pot recovery program, the below matrix is helpful

Quarter	Consumer Waste Influx	Commercial Grower Demand	Program Priority

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Q1 (Jan–Mar)	Low → Rising Rapidly	High (Late winter potting)	Deploy clean bins to nurseries by late February; clear winter stock out to growers.
Q2 (Apr–Jun)	CRITICAL PEAK	Low (Focus is on retail shipping)	Max collection mode. Optimize logistics to handle high volumes of returns from consumers. Stockpile and sort.
Q3 (Jul–Sep)	Low (Summer slump)	CRITICAL PEAK (Summer propagation)	Max distribution mode. Sanitize, sort, and deliver your stockpiled spring pots back to growers.
Q4 (Oct–Dec)	Moderate (Fall planting bump)	Moderate → High (Bare-root prep)	Collect fall planting containers; distribute larger tree tubs to commercial growers.

By treating **Q2 as the primary collection window** and **Q3 as the primary distribution window**, it would minimize storage footprint costs and ensure that clean, recycled containers land in growers' hands exactly when their planting lines open up.

III. Proposed Strategy

To address these deficiencies, Zero Waste Marin should adopt a three-track strategy focusing on **Source Reduction through Reuse**, the establishment of **Reliable Collection Points** and **consistency for recycling County Wide**. This strategy is proposed for full implementation beginning **February 2027**, allowing for a robust planning and partnership phase throughout 2026 and communication in advance of major planting in

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the early spring 2027 when there will be an increase in the usage of the nursery pots. This also allows for the secondary option of recycling to be implemented county wide and/or being prepared for the implementation of SB54.

The core pillars of this strategy include:

- **Measuring Efforts Now:** Determine baseline of reuse and recycling in county and make an estimate on those 1) reused, 2) recycled and 3) destined to landfill.
- **Prioritizing Reuse:** Shifting the focus from recycling—which is often economically volatile for black plastics—to a circular model where pots are returned to nurseries or retail centers for reuse.
- **Standardized Regional Access:** Creating a centralized, accurate database of drop-off locations to eliminate confusion for residents across different jurisdictions.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Leveraging existing retailer infrastructures (e.g., big-box home improvement stores and local nurseries) to serve as primary intake hubs. There are 10 primary commercial nurseries and an additional 6 speciality nurseries. A list can be found at the end of this recommendation.
- **Timing** Because plants are live, perishable products, the entire horticultural supply chain—and consequently, the generation of plastic waste—is highly seasonal. A successful recovery program needs to sync with two distinct schedules: **commercial growers** (who need empty pots to plant into) and **consumers** (who empty the pots and generate the waste).
- **Develop Consistency for Recycling:** As noted, there is not a consistent approach by haulers in Marin County for all colors of High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE #2) or Polypropylene (PP #5). Ensuring constancy of this should be done in parallel with reuse efforts.

IV. Recommended Actions

To ensure a successful reuse communication plan launch in February 2027, the following actions are recommended for immediate initiation.

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Time Frame	Action Item	Description
July 2026	Website Infrastructure	Immediately restore and update the recycling resource links on the ZWM website to provide accurate information on current disposal options.
July 2026	Identify why there is not a consistency for recycling these containers in Marin	As noted, different haulers have different approaches for recycling these nursery pots. This should be addressed to match other county wide information.
July-August 2026	StopWaste Model Investigation and baseline count creation	Reach out to StopWaste in the East Bay to evaluate their process for creating and maintaining a comprehensive list of plant pot drop-off locations, their management model and how they have “measured success”
August 2026	Retailer Take-Back Catalog	Conduct a survey of local Marin retailers and national chains (such as Home Depot) to confirm active take-back programs and compile a definitive list for public use.
October-November 2026	Update Web and Communication	

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Time Frame	Action Item	Description
December - January 2027	February 2027 Implementation Plan	Develop a phased rollout plan that includes bilingual community workshops, hauler coordination, and a marketing campaign centered on the "Return to Retailer" model.
Feb-2027-July 2027	Promote reuse and drop off	Work with participating retailers review program efforts and management of taking back pots for reuse.
Aug-Sept 2027	Calculate landfill diversion	Work with stakeholders to determine success of program and next steps for 2028 improvements.

Within this plan, Zero Waste Marin should be actively identifying how compliance to SB 54 works in parallel with this, ensuring that the County and all stakeholders meet the needs of this state law.

By following this structured approach, Zero Waste Marin can close a critical gap in its waste diversion efforts and provide residents with a reliable, sustainable solution for horticultural plastic waste. As ZWM develops a program, ensuring the small retailers can manage the influx of pots during late Q1 and Q2 is important to develop a strong program that understands the other stresses in the market.



Appendix

A1. Existing Programs/Approaches

The North Bay (Marin, Sonoma, & Napa)

The North Bay has highly progressive waste policies and localized nursery programs.

- **Napa Recycling (Curbside Exception):** Remarkably, Napa is a rare exception to the standard rule. Clean, rigid plastic pots and trays *are* accepted in Napa's curbside recycling carts. However, they explicitly draw the line at the ultra-flimsy, crinkly black cell packs (starter trays), which must still go in the landfill cart.
- **Sonoma County Community Networks:** Local independent mainstays like Cal-Native Plants (Point Reyes Station) or specialty native nurseries in Sonoma often take back specific sizes (usually 1-gallon and 5-gallon) to support their ongoing conservation propagation.
- **Agricultural Extensions & Conservation Districts:** Organizations like the Marin Resource Conservation District or Sonoma Resource Conservation District frequently coordinate large-scale native replanting projects. They often welcome bulk donations of clean, sturdy rigid pots to support watershed restoration plant propagation.

East Bay (Alameda & Contra Costa Counties)

The East Bay has some of the most organized infrastructure for nursery pot diversion in Northern California, largely coordinated through **StopWaste** (the Alameda County Waste Management Authority).

Independent Nursery Drop-offs

Several long-standing East Bay independent nurseries actively take back clean plastic pots, flats, and trays directly from the community to wash and reuse them for their own propagation operations:

- **East Bay Nursery (Berkeley):** Features an active, free public drop-off program for used pots. They request that you completely knock out all loose dirt, roots, and plastic tags before stacked drop-off.

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- **Berkeley Horticultural Nursery (Berkeley):** Frequently accepts rigid 1-gallon and 5-gallon containers back, depending on their seasonal propagation volumes (it is always best to call ahead if bringing a truckload).
- **Flowerland (Albany) & Broadway Terrace Nursery (Oakland):** Both support community reuse and often serve as localized hubs for gardeners looking to clear out or pick up used containers.

Public Resource Drop-offs

- **El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center:** This facility is a regional standout because it bypasses the curbside sorting issue by offering a dedicated, standalone "Planters Bin." Residents can drop off clean, rigid plastic nursery pots and flats here, which are bundled and shipped directly to bulk agricultural recyclers.
- **The East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse (Oakland):** Located on Telegraph Avenue, this massive non-profit accepts a wide range of surplus materials. They regularly take sturdy, small-to-medium plastic nursery pots and seedling trays, redistributing them at low or zero cost to local school garden programs, urban teachers, and community artists.

San Francisco

Because San Francisco has zero-waste mandates, local organizations have stepped up to create dedicated capture networks for these containers.

Specialized Public Drop-offs

- **The Recology San Francisco Transfer Station (Unlocking Resource Recovery):** While you cannot put nursery pots in your curbside blue bin, you *can* drop them off directly at the Recology Public Reuse and Recycling Area (located at 501 Tunnel Ave). They maintain dedicated bulk collection zones for rigid plastics, bypassing the automated residential sorting conveyor belts entirely.
- **SCRAP (Scroungers Center for Reusable Art Parts):** Located in the Bayview district, this legendary creative reuse center accepts small, sturdy plastic nursery pots, seedling trays, and clay pottery. They pass these materials along at little to no cost to SFUSD public school teachers, community artists, and urban community garden programs.



Independent Retail & Community Take-Backs

- **Sloat Garden Center (San Francisco Locations):** Sloat operates two highly active urban locations in the city—one on Sloat Boulevard (near the Zoo) and one on Pierce Street (in the Marina/Pacific Heights area). As part of their regional footprint, they frequently take back clean, stacked rigid pots from customers when their wholesale growers are actively reclaiming containers.
- **Flowercraft Garden Center:** Located in the Bayshore neighborhood, this large independent center serves as an excellent resource for urban gardeners and occasionally accepts structural 1-gallon and 5-gallon containers back depending on seasonal demand.
- **SF Parks Alliance & Community Gardens:** The San Francisco Parks Alliance supports over a hundred community gardens, school yards, and city parks. Local community garden hubs (like the Alemany Farm in southeast SF) frequently welcome clean, durable propagation trays and pots to support their public workshops and free seed-starting programs.

The Peninsula (San Mateo County)

The Peninsula's waste infrastructure is largely managed by RethinkWaste (SBWMA) and hauled by Recology San Mateo County. They explicitly instruct residents to place plastic nursery pots into the black landfill bin to prevent contaminating the clean plastics stream, making the following local options essential for diversion.

Independent Nursery Drop-offs

- **Wegman's Nursery (Redwood City):** A massive, multi-generational independent garden center on Woodside Road. They are deeply integrated into the local gardening community and frequently accept clean, durable plastic nursery pots to reuse for their own inventory or transport back to commercial growers.
- **Golden Nursery (San Mateo):** Located on Norfolk Street, this family-owned nursery is an excellent local point of contact for checking seasonal pot drop-off capacity.
- **Ladbroke Soil and Water / Local Farms:** Along the coastal side of the Peninsula (Half Moon Bay and Pacifica), there is a massive commercial greenhouse and agricultural footprint. Small-scale organic operations and specialty nurseries (like Yerba Buena Nursery in Half Moon Bay, which focuses strictly on California natives) often reuse specific sizes of rigid containers for localized propagation.



Big-Box Logistics

- **The Home Depot & Lowe's (Peninsula Locations):** Major high-volume hubs—such as the Home Depot locations in Colma and San Carlos, or Lowe's in San Bruno—host the standardized national plastic pot recycling racks in their garden centers. Dropping off containers here guarantees they bypass municipal sorting and go directly into a dedicated mechanical grinding and remanufacturing loop.

South Bay (Santa Clara County & Silicon Valley)

In the South Bay, municipal programs like **San Jose Recycles** explicitly classify plastic nursery pots as **garbage/landfill items if put in the curbside blue bin**. However, robust regional alternatives exist to keep them circular.

Retailer and Commercial Networks

- **Lowe's Home Improvement & The Home Depot (Regional Locations):** Both big-box retailers have a heavy presence in the South Bay (including major locations in San Jose, Sunnyvale, and Milpitas). Their garden centers feature national take-back stations that feed directly into a closed-loop mechanical recycling stream. They accept all rigid plastic nursery containers, regardless of the original point of purchase.
- **San Lorenzo Garden Center (Bordering the South Bay/Santa Cruz):** If you venture slightly south toward the Santa Cruz mountain border, this regional staple hosts a highly popular, formalized public **"Take a Pot, Leave a Pot" exchange area** on Mora Street right behind the main nursery. It acts as an open community hub where backyard growers and local propagation hobbyists swap clean containers freely.

Community Agriculture and Food Forests

- **Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County:** Operating out of centers like the Martial Cottle Park ranch site in San Jose, the local UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners manage large-scale research and public education crops. They frequently accept donations of rigid, sanitized 1-gallon, 2-gallon, and 5-gallon pots to support their annual spring plant sales.
- **Urban Agriculture Non-Profits:** Organizations like **Veggielution** (an urban farm in East San Jose) or local community garden networks managed by San Jose Parks & Rec often rely on structural donations of heavy-duty containers to start seeds and distribute vegetable starts to low-income community food programs.



Southern California

Southern California's massive agricultural footprint and year-round growing season have created robust retail and community channels for pot reuse.

Independent Southern California Nurseries:

- **San Diego County:** As a major hub for commercial horticulture, several local retail nurseries will accept containers back. Major independent centers like Walter Andersen Nurseries (San Diego and Poway) or Armstrong Garden Centers (locations across LA, Orange County, and San Diego) frequently coordinate return or reuse setups, though it is best to call ahead to check current bin capacity.
- **LA Basin:** The Burbank Recycling Center runs an active public education campaign routing residents away from curbside bins (where black plastic is rejected) and directly toward local nursery take-back partnerships or local sharing marketplaces.
- **The "Tree Yard" and Community Food Forests:** Grassroots urban agriculture non-profits—like TreePeople in Los Angeles or Food Forward—frequently manage community orchards and urban canopy projects. They are excellent outlets for donating 5-gallon and larger tree tubs.

National Programs (Across the US)

If you are traveling or advising someone outside of California, two massive retail networks provide consistent, nationwide drop-off options.

The Big-Box Garden Center Drop-Offs

- **The Home Depot:** Their nationwide partnership with East Jordan Plastics is active at nearly every location in the continental US. Look for the black recycling sign with the green plant emblem inside the garden center fences. You can drop off rigid plastic pots from *any* brand or store. **(Need to confirm)**
- **Lowe's Home Improvement:** Lowe's runs a highly similar national take-back program. Their garden centers feature dedicated recycling centers that accept plastic nursery pots, flats, and even plastic plant tags regardless of where the original plant was purchased. **(Need to confirm are there Lowes in the north bay?)**

Timing

The regional Bay Area programs previously discussed handle these constraints through three different operational strategies:

1) The "Buffer & Stockpile" Strategy

Independent retail nurseries (like Sloat Garden Center, Green Jeans, and the East Bay/Berkeley nurseries) face a real estate challenge. Consumers flood them with empty plastic pots in April and May, exactly when the nursery's footprint is already crammed with spring inventory.

- **How they adapt:** Most independent nurseries can only run take-back programs because they act as a pass-through buffer. Instead of holding pots indefinitely, they rely on immediate transport networks.
- **The commercial loop:** Wholesale growers deliver fresh truckloads of spring plants to these retail nurseries weekly during peak season. Retailers utilize the *return legs* of those same delivery trucks, loading them up with stacks of collected, empty pots to send back to the commercial growers' massive rural sorting yards (often in the Central Valley or outer North Bay). This clears retail space immediately and places the pots back in commercial hands right before summer propagation begins.

2) The "Mass Industrial Absorption" Strategy

The national big-box programs operated by The Home Depot and Lowe's absorb the seasonal shock wave through pure logistical scale.

- **How they adapt:** Because consumer drop-offs spike massively in Q2, these retailers utilize dedicated palletized collection racks in their outdoor garden centers. Rather than sorting or cleaning pots locally, the material is aggregated, palletized, and wrapped.
- **Logistical buffering:** These pallets enter the reverse-logistics networks of industrial partners like East Jordan Plastics. Because these operations process tens of millions of pounds of plastic annually, they possess the industrial warehouse capacity to stockpile raw post-consumer plastic flakes and pellets

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during the spring glut. They hold this raw material buffer, then ramp up extrusion and thermoforming manufacturing in Q3 and Q4 to churn out brand-new pots and trays precisely when commercial growers order their next lifecycle containers.

3) The "Static Depot" Strategy

Dedicated municipal drop-off sites—such as the El Cerrito Recycling Center's "Planters Bin" or the Recology San Francisco Public Reuse Area—do not experience the same real-estate anxiety as commercial retail stores.

- **How they adapt:** Public resource depots are engineered for variable volume. They treat plastic nursery pots as a dedicated, segregated commodity stream.
- **Bypassing the bottleneck:** Because they are not trying to sell plants or propagate crops on-site, a facility like El Cerrito can accumulate massive volumes in their dedicated bins during the spring spike without interrupting daily operations. Once a critical weight or volume threshold is hit, the material is consolidated, baled, and transferred directly to regional commercial plastic brokers (such as Bay Polymer in Lodi), who feed the secondary industrial market exactly when plastic demands fluctuate.

Nursery Locations in Marin

Nursery Name	Location (City)
Greenpoint Nursery	Novato
Home Ground Habitats	Novato
Sloat Garden Center (Novato)	Novato
SummerWinds Nursery	Novato
Cal-Native Plants	Point Reyes Station
Fairfax Native Plant Nursery	Fairfax

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O'Donnell's Fairfax Nursery	Fairfax
Cactus Jungle Nursery and Garden	San Anselmo
Ross Valley Nursery	San Anselmo
The Home Depot	San Rafael
West End Nursery	San Rafael
Sloat Garden Center (Kentfield)	Kentfield
CNL Native Plant Nursery	Mill Valley
Green Jeans Garden Supply	Mill Valley
Sloat Garden Center (East Blithedale)	Mill Valley
Sloat Garden Center (Miller Ave)	Mill Valley

Additional Details:

<u>Proposed Timeline of Actions:</u>
<u>Evaluation of Equity Impact of Proposed Action or Program:</u>
<u>Estimated Fiscal Impact of Proposed Action or Program:</u>

Comments by Zero Waste Marin Staff:

Recommendation by Zero Waste Marin Executive Director:

Recommended next steps:	
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Addressing the Plastic Nursery Pot Waste Gap in Marin County

A Recommendation to the Zero Waste Marin JPA Board

Prepared by the Local Task Force Infrastructure and End Markets Subcommittee

July 9, 2026



Landfill Impact & Operational Constraints



- **National Scale:** The US generates 175,000 tons of plastic plant pot waste annually.
- **Environmental Toll:** Weather-resistant HDPE #2 and PP #5 plastics take 450 years to break down.
- **Service Inconsistency:** Novato and Sausalito recycle black plastic pots; other Marin jurisdictions send them to landfills.
- **Diversion Opportunity:** Plastics represent almost 15% of the 2025 ZWM Waste Characterization Study and the plastic nursery pots represent an identifiable *Covered Material Category* under SB 54

Diversion Target

Make an estimate on amount being landfilled and recycled, and find a way to reduce



INITIATIVE OUTLINE

CIRCULAR SYSTEMS ROADMAP

Three-Track Circular Solution

Prioritize Reuse

01

Shift focus from economically volatile recycling to a circular retail take-back model.

Reliable Collection Points

02

Create a centralized database of standardized regional drop-off locations.

County-Wide Consistency

03

Align hauler policies for HDPE #2 and PP #5 plastics across all jurisdictions.

Recommended Actions & Phased Timeline



Phase 1 July–Aug 2026

Update ZWM website and audit hauler inconsistencies.



Phase 2 Aug–Nov 2026

Catalog retailer take-back programs and update communications.



Phase 3 Dec 2026–Jan 2027

Finalize the phased Implementation Plan.



Launch Feb 2027

Official program launch.



Evaluation Aug–Sept 2027

Calculate landfill diversion and evaluate success.

Targeted launch in February 2027 prepares Marin County to capture the spring peak discard volume.



MARIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Belvedere Corte Madera County of Marin Fairfax Larkspur Mill Valley
Novato Ross San Anselmo San Rafael Sausalito Tiburon

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES – ITEM 6

TO Local Task Force
FROM Casey Fritz, Senior Planner
SUBJECT Subcommittee Updates
DATE Thursday, July 9th, 2026

Subcommittees were established in the November 2023 Local Task Force meeting with a goal of facilitating more focused discussion and recommendations. The Subcommittees formed included:

- Infrastructure & End Markets
- Outreach & Education
- Construction & Demolition

At each meeting, Subcommittees will report on their recent activities and any upcoming recommendations or projects.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only. Receive and file.



MARIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Belvedere Cortes Madera County of Marin Fairfax Larkspur Mill Valley
Novato Ross San Anselmo San Rafael Sausalito Tiburon

SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS – ITEM 7

TO Local Task Force

FROM Casey Fritz, Senior Planner

SUBJECT Suggested Agenda Items

DATE Thursday, July 9th, 2026

Local Task Force members can suggest agenda items for the next meeting during this time.

RECOMMENDATION

Information Only. Receive and file.