



Zero Waste Marin Joint Powers Authority: Annual Report for FY 25/26



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Letter from the Executive Director

Fiscal Year 2025–2026 was a year of significant progress for Zero Waste Marin. Building on the systems, data, partnerships, and pilot programs established over the past several years, we moved further from program development into implementation, measurement, and expansion.

As California’s solid waste and recycling requirements continue to evolve, so does Zero Waste Marin’s role. Our work increasingly requires us to balance regulatory compliance with direct community service, regional coordination, public education, data management, and long-term planning. This year, our team continued to strengthen that work while preparing for the next major transition in California waste policy: implementation of SB 54 and extended producer responsibility for packaging.

FY 2025–2026 Accomplishments

Strengthened SB 1383 Compliance

- ✓ Expanded from education into proactive technical assistance, inspections, and enforcement.
- ✓ Completed 90 business technical assistance visits and 56 edible food generator inspections.
- ✓ Successfully secured a 49% reduction in Marin’s ROWP procurement target using data from the County-wide Waste Characterization Study.

Household Hazardous Waste Programs

- ✓ Expanded the battery collection network to 44 locations and improved HHW education, online resources, and outreach.
- ✓ Collected 1,678 expired marine flares and expanded convenient HHW disposal through West Marin Toxic Away Days.
- ✓ Collected 437 vape devices from Marin schools and continued research to inform the upcoming Vape Pen Study.

Expanded and Improved Community Engagement

- ✓ Participated in 31 community events throughout Marin.
- ✓ Launched the bilingual Give Old Food New Life countywide campaign across transit, streaming audio, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and other digital channels, generating millions of impressions.
- ✓ Increased Instagram followers from 580 to 982 and transitioned from quarterly to monthly newsletters.

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- ✓ Conducted English- and Spanish-language focus groups to better understand community knowledge, barriers, and effective messaging related to composting and HHW.
- ✓ Began using focus group findings to refine ZWM's website, outreach campaigns, and audience-specific messaging, with additional research planned for FY 2026/27.

Looking Ahead

The coming year represents another important transition for Zero Waste Marin. SB 1383 will remain a significant operational responsibility as inspections, technical assistance, enforcement, recordkeeping, and reporting continue to increase. At the same time, California's implementation of SB 54, the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act, will begin reshaping how packaging is funded, collected, recycled, and managed throughout the state.

Zero Waste Marin will work closely with our member agencies, CalRecycle, Circular Action Alliance California, neighboring jurisdictions, haulers, and other partners to develop a coordinated regional approach to SB 54 implementation and ensure that Marin is positioned to take advantage of the resources and opportunities created by extended producer responsibility.

The work ahead is substantial, but the foundation we have built is strong. Over the past several years, Zero Waste Marin has invested in better data, stronger systems, expanded partnerships, and programs that directly serve our communities. Our next challenge is to use that foundation to deliver measurable results while adapting to a rapidly changing regulatory and materials-management landscape.

I am grateful to our staff, Board, member agencies, haulers, community partners, and residents for their continued collaboration and commitment. Together, we are building a more coordinated, effective, and sustainable approach to managing Marin's resources and reducing waste.

Sincerely,



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 and implement different aspects of Zero Waste Marin programs. Zero Waste Marin staff are employed by the County of Marin and have an 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,
Administrative Programs

Casey Fritz
Senior Planner, Zero
Waste Programs

Kathy Rico
Senior Planner, HHW
Programs

Jessica Ruiz
Senior Program
Coordinator

Meilin Tsao
Waste Management
Specialist

Ellie Vendegna
Program Coordinator

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 authorized to vote on behalf of their jurisdiction.

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

Todd Cusimano serves as Board Chair and Christa Johnson serves as Vice Chair.

Robert Zadnik
City Manager
City of Belvedere

Dan Schwarz (B)
City Manager
City of Larkspur (Alt)

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

Bridget Wipfler
Climate Action Coordinator
Town of San Anselmo (Alt)

Adam Wolff (P)
Town Manager
Town of Corte Madera

Todd Cusimano (E)(B)
City Manager
City of Mill Valley

Angela Robinson Pinon (E)
Asst City Manager
City of San Rafael

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

Grace Ledwith (P)
Climate Action &
Sustainability Coordinator
City of Mill Valley (Alt)

Cory Bytof (P)
Sustainability Manager
City of San Rafael (Alt)

Derek Johnson
County Executive
County of Marin

Bill Rose (E)
Asst. City Manager
City of Novato

Chris Zapata
City Manager
City of Sausalito

Talia Smith (E)
Deputy County Executive
County of Marin (Alt)

Gretchen Schubeck (P)
Sustainability
Coordinator
City of Novato (Alt)

Catie Thow Garcia
Resilience & Sustainability
Manager (Alt)
City of Sausalito

Heather Abrams
Town Manager
Town of Fairfax

Christa Johnson (E)(B)
Town Manager
Town of Ross

Greg Chanis (B)
Town Manager
Town of Tiburon

Maureen Borthwick
Recreation Manager
Town of Ross (Alt)

David Eshoo
Associate Engineer
Town of Tiburon (Alt)

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Major Program Accomplishments: FY 2025/26



Completed 90 on-site visits to offer proactive technical assistance to businesses.



Offered a cost-share subsidy program for farms, gardens, and residents to purchase compost products from West Marin Compost.



Inspected 56 covered Edible Food Generators for SB 1383 compliance.



Collected 437 vape pens from Marin County schools for safe disposal in partnership with the Marin County Office of Education.



Hosted ZWM's first ever public meeting to solicit feedback on the results of the Waste Characterization Study.



Distributed free signage & color-coded containers to 80 businesses to support compliance.



Continued monthly meetings with city / town Sustainability staff to enhance County-wide collaboration.



Hosted 12 free Repair Fairs with Reuse Alliance to bring free fixing to communities around the County.



Prepared for an improvement and expansion of the battery drop-off program.

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Regulatory Compliance & Reporting

SB 1383 Compliance Efforts

Zero Waste Marin has Letters of Agreement with each of its twelve member agencies to ensure compliance with many of the requirements included in California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Reduction Act, also known as SB 1383. ZWM leads education and outreach, inspection efforts, procurement of recovered organic waste products, recordkeeping, technical assistance and on-site support, and enforcement up until the point of a citation for non-compliance.

To satisfy the requirement for an annual notification to residents about composting and the law, a postcard was mailed in April 2026 to all residential addresses (97,280 homes or apartment units) in Marin County across all jurisdictions. The postcard focused on the benefits of composting and the negative ramifications of landfilling food scraps. This postcard had all information in English and Spanish.



Sending food scraps to landfills creates methane gas and results in climate impacts such as wildfires.

The average person throws out one pound of food per day. If landfilled, over a year this releases 198 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, the same as driving 229 miles in a gas car.

Cuando los restos de comida llegan a los basureros, generan gas metano y contribuyen al cambio climático.

En promedio, una persona tira a la basura una libra de comida al día. Si se deposita en la basura, esto genera, en un año, 198 libras de emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero, lo que equivale a conducir 229 millas en un carro de gasolina.

Composting our food scraps returns nutrients to the soil and fights climate change.

If we were to each compost our food scraps instead of landfilling them, we would prevent landfill emissions and create healthy soils for our local farms to grow food, supporting bountiful harvests across Marin.

Compostar nuestros restos de comida devuelve los nutrientes a la tierra y ayuda a combatir el cambio climático.

Si cada uno de nosotros compostara las sobras de comida en lugar de tirarlos en la basura, evitaríamos las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero y crearíamos suelos saludables para que las granjas locales cultiven alimentos, lo que contribuiría a cosechas abundantes en Marin.

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ZWM also began proactively offering technical assistance in dense business areas during the 25/26 FY. Staff bring the Business Compliance Checklist and complete short on-site visits to organic waste-generating businesses to offer support in the form of staff training, free infrastructure, and free signage. To date, ZWM staff have completed 90 visits to businesses in the following areas:

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- ✓ Bolinas
- ✓ Stinson Beach
- ✓ Fairfax
- ✓ San Anselmo
- ✓ Bon Air Center
- ✓ Downtown Mill Valley
- ✓ Downtown San Rafael

Staff will continue these technical assistance visits in the 2026/27 Fiscal Year.

In addition to proactive technical assistance, ZWM staff began conducting formal inspections of sites to assess compliance during the 2025/26 FY. ZWM staff completed 56 on-site inspections of edible food generators. During inspections, staff provided employees with the Business Compliance Checklist, available in English and Spanish, and reviewed the SB 1383 requirements that apply to their site, including waste sorting, labeling, and adequate service in addition to the food donation requirements.



Color-coded containers provided during an on-site inspection.

Finally, ZWM also manages compliance with Marin's requirement to procure Recovered Organic Waste Products (ROWP), namely finished compost and mulch. Calendar year 2025 was the first year ZWM was responsible for procuring 100% of the original procurement target assigned to member agencies by the SB 1383 regulations. Using data from the FY2024/25 Waste Characterization Study, in FY2025/26 ZWM submitted a recalculated procurement target to CalRecycle and was successfully granted a reduction of 49% which more accurately reflects disposal of organics in Marin County. To capitalize on ZWM's State-funded Local Assistance Grant, ZWM procured all required ROWP tons for the 2026 calendar year (January 2026 – December 2026) in fiscal year 2025/26 (July 2025 – June 2026) through compost products and agreements with Zero Foodprint and West Marin Compost.

Annual Audit

As part of its responsibilities under the Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste Management Authority Joint Powers Agreement, Zero Waste Marin undergoes an independent annual audit to verify the accuracy of its financial records and ensure continued fiscal transparency.

For the FY 2025–26 audit, Zero Waste Marin maintained its commitment to clear and accurate financial reporting by continuing to refine internal documentation practices, strengthen contract and procurement tracking, and uphold consistent project-level and program-level financial monitoring. These efforts support ZWM's broader goal of

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maintaining reliable, well-organized records that reflect the scope of its countywide programs and services.

The complete FY 2025–26 audit report, including all findings, recommendations, and financial statements is available to the public on the Zero Waste Marin website in the Tuesday, June 2, 2026 board agenda packet.

CalRecycle Electronic Annual Report (EAR)

The Electronic Annual Report (EAR) was submitted to CalRecycle by the August 1, 2025 deadline, maintaining Zero Waste Marin’s record of timely and accurate reporting on behalf of all member agencies. The EAR continues to serve as the State’s central resource for tracking regional progress in waste reduction, organics recovery, and overall SB 1383 compliance throughout Marin County.

The EAR consolidates information across all major SB 1383 reporting categories, including Procurement, Edible Food Recovery, Collection Systems, Education and Outreach, MWELO, C&D/CalGreen, Household Hazardous Waste Programs, Waivers and Exemptions, Contamination Monitoring, Inspections and Complaints, Enforcement and Monitoring, and required Planning Documentation. Data submitted by Bay Cities Refuse, Marin Sanitary Service, Mill Valley Refuse, and Recology—covering both commercial and residential programs—were combined with jurisdictional submittals and staff-prepared narrative explanations. The report presents a comprehensive body of data and narrative summaries detailing program activities, performance, and implementation progress across all reporting areas.

With several years of reporting now complete, staff can rely on a more established baseline to identify trends, refine outreach and inspection strategies, and support continuous improvement across member agencies. Following the timely submission of the August 2025 report, staff have begun preparing the next EAR, due August 3, 2026.

Waste Characterization Study Implementation Plan

In FY24/25 ZWM conducted a Waste Characterization Study that surveyed the contents of materials disposed throughout Marin County. The study included eighty 200-pound samples collected, sorted, and analyzed by hand into 74 material categories at Redwood Landfill in Novato from the residential, commercial, and multi-family sectors. Additionally, 58 samples were visually inspected at the Marin Sanitary Service Transfer Station and sorted into 38 material types from generators who choose to self-haul their material, rather than subscribe to collection services. The residential, commercial, and multi-family portion of the study found that the largest portion of material still going to

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landfill is classified as “organic” defined by SB 1383 and a total of 60% of material going to landfill could easily be recycled or composted through programs already accessible in Marin. The self-haul portion of the study found that that 26.2% of material disposed could easily be recycled or composted in Marin.

To follow up on the information gained from conducting the Study, staff wrote and finalized an implementation plan based on the study’s recommendations. The formation of the plan consisted of an initial draft by staff, followed by review from the JPA’s Programmatic Subcommittee, the Local Task Force, and ZWM’s first-ever public meeting to receive feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders. The finalized plan and an update regarding work that has been conducted will be presented to the Local Task Force for review at their next meeting on Thursday, September 3rd.

Household Hazardous Waste Programs

HHW Enhancement Projects

On August 17, 2025, the JPA board approved additional funds to enhance the existing household hazardous waste (HHW) programs offered by Zero Waste Marin. These enhancement efforts were focused on improving battery disposal infrastructure and diversifying existing outreach and education to help Marin residents understand their options when disposing of HHW.

As part of an effort to make proper disposal easy and convenient for residents across Marin County, Zero Waste Marin staff have worked to increase the number of battery collection sites to 44 locations. Staff purchased durable battery storage containers labeled with clear signage in English and Spanish. These collection containers will be installed in the fall of 2026 at participating fire stations, retailers, organizations and partner agencies. In addition to these public containers, staff purchased corrugated cardboard boxes to give away to Marin County residents to create a safe, easy way to collect and transport household batteries to the San Rafael HHW facility.

In addition to infrastructure enhancements, the materials for HHW education and



A sample of the new battery collection containers that will be available at 44 sites throughout Marin County.

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outreach were also improved as part of this effort. A postcard was mailed to all Marin County residents, excluding Novato, in June 2026 to increase awareness of the types of HHW common to households and options for disposal. New educational materials also include printed resources focused on specific types of HHW such as vape pens and solar panels to offer more specific information to residents. These resources will be handed out during tabling at events and community spaces. To improve digital assets, ZWM staff worked with contractors to produce several educational videos about marine flare disposal and the collection events put on by ZWM. The HHW webpages have also been updated to make information clearer and more accessible for Marin County residents.

A total of six enhancement projects were implemented, costing the agency \$483,547.16 against an approved budget of \$500,000.

Marine Flares Collection Event

On November 9, 2025, Zero Waste Marin hosted its third Marin Flare collection event at the 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. As a result, this highly anticipated and valued collection event in Marin County is growing in popularity.

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.

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



Two people inspect marine flares dropped off at a collection event at Clipper Yacht Harbor in Sausalito.

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marine flares collected during the event. During this event, 78 participants dropped off their flares, and a total of 1,678 marine flares were collected.

During FY 2023-2024, the agency received a \$100,000 grant from CalRecycle to fund two years of expenses associated with collecting and disposing of marine flares generated by recreational boaters in Marin County. In fiscal year 2025-2026, the agency spent \$62,045.04 on CPSC, Clean Harbors, and U.S. Coast Guard-approved electronic visual distress signal devices (eVDSDs).

CPSC partnered with Sirius Signal to purchase the eVDSDs at a wholesale cost of \$35, allowing the agency to use a portion of the grant funds to provide free eVDSDs to Marin residents as a safer alternative to pyrotechnic marine flares.



Sirius Signal electronic flares were distributed during the marine flares collection event.

Temporary Collection Events in West Marin

ZWM hosted two “Toxic Away Day” events during the 25/26 Fiscal Year, one in Bolinas and one in Point Reyes Station. 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. During these events, Zero Waste Marin HHW staff educate residents of Bolinas and Point Reyes 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.

While the Bolinas event is typically held in the fall, this Fiscal Year it was rescheduled due to weather concerns. It was held instead on April 28, 2026, and collected 6,460 pounds of waste from 70 participants. On May 16, 2026, ZWM held the second “Toxic Away Day” in Point Reyes, where 4,020 pounds of household hazardous waste were collected from 53 participants.

ZWM staff has found that event promotion is most effective through the Point Reyes Light newspaper,



An aerial view of a Toxic Away Day event in West Marin.

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local whiteboards at stores and the post office, Next Door, and word of mouth. West Marin Residents often express their gratitude for these events and note that they look forward each year to the household hazardous waste collection held in the fall and spring.

Solar Panel Pilot

ZWM staff continued collaboration with the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) and Conservation Corps North Bay (CCNB) to pilot a solar panel collection program. This program began in the 2023/24 Fiscal Year with the goals of understanding current disposal patterns, as well as opportunities to promote panel reuse and recycling. The first two phases of this program focused on planning and subsequent implementation of a removal and reuse/recycling program, respectively.

During the 2025/26 FY CPSC resumed solar panel collection when residents requested pick-ups. They conducted 13 pick-ups and facilitated 2 drop-offs over the period of August 2025 – June 2026. During this time 446 solar panels were collected, bringing the total number of panels collected over the course of this project to 701. After pick-up, panels are tested to determine if they are eligible for reuse. Panels that are still usable are being repurposed to power chicken coops on farms and pool pumps and filters.

Over the last three years, CPSC collected extensive data, surveyed Marin residents and businesses, and confirmed that a home collection service was the best way to support proper reuse and recycling of solar panels. They helped staff identify CCNB as the best team to manage collection and panel reuse and Recycle 1234 as the best recycler. Together with these partners, ZWM hosted reuse workshops and supported agrivoltaic projects that combine solar energy with agricultural land use. Thank you to the Marin Builders Association, Quattro, Reuse Alliance, and Amy's Roofing for your collaboration.



A chicken coop received repurposed solar panels to electrify the building.

Vape Pen Collection

Vape pens pose a unique and growing waste disposal challenge. In February 2020 the FDA banned the sale of flavored nicotine for *reusable* vape cartridges, but not for *disposable* cartridges. Since that time, sales of disposable vape pens have increased 196.2%, with sales figures at 11.9 million vapes per month. Americans now throw out

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4.5 vape pens every second.¹ When these products are finished, they pose a complicated waste disposal problem for several reasons:

1. These devices contain embedded batteries, which means they are electronic waste. Batteries can cause fires when punctured or damaged.
2. Liquid nicotine is considered an acutely toxic substance.
3. Liquid cannabis is not federally legal and is considered a controlled substance.
4. More than half (53%)² of vape pen sales are of single-use products, which are not designed to be refilled or reused.

During the 2025/26 fiscal year ZWM continued to work with the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) to safely collect and dispose of vape pens on school campuses across Marin County. This partnership began in the 2024/25 fiscal year after MCOE approached ZWM to ask about how to safely handle an accumulation of vape pens on school campuses. ZWM worked with MCOE, Marin Sanitary Service, and GAIACA (an authorized vape pen hauler) to develop a plan to collect these vape pens. ZWM acts as the funder for the vape pen collection and also provides information for MCOE to inform their program and strategy. Regulations around the collection and disposal of vape pens continue to evolve.

Pick-ups for school site accumulations were coordinated with GAIACA for the end of the first semester, December 2025, and the end of the second semester, June 2026. In December 2025, 198 vape devices were collected from 19 school campuses. In June 2026, 239 vape devices were collected from 17 school campuses.



Vape pens were collected and categorized in June 2026 to gather data on vape usage in Marin's schools.

¹ "Monitoring E-Cigarette Use Among Youth | CDC Foundation," March 2023 Data Brief, accessed July 27, 2026, <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/programs/monitoring-e-cigarette-use-among-youth>

² "Monitoring E-Cigarette Use Among Youth | CDC Foundation," March 2023 Data Brief, accessed July 27, 2026, <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/programs/monitoring-e-cigarette-use-among-youth>

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Zero Waste Marin staff have participated in cataloging the vape pens collected from Marin County school sites and have also been collecting data about vape pens collected at the permanent HHW Facility in San Rafael. This data will be compiled into a study report on vape pens focused on disposal behaviors in Marin.

The Household Hazardous Waste Facility

The Marin Household Hazardous Waste Facility remains one of the most important HHW programs in the region, serving as the primary location for most Marin residents and businesses to conveniently dispose of household hazardous waste. In 2025–26, ZWM continued its partnership with the Marin Recycling and Resource Recovery Association (MRRRA), which manages the facility and oversees the reuse, recycling, and disposal of household hazardous waste on behalf of Zero Waste Marin. ZWM is the generator of record for all the waste collected and shipped by the Marin HHW Facility staff.

Improvements to the HHW Facility included transitioning to a digital check-in and tracking system to improve data accuracy and simplify reporting, as well as quarterly maintenance and cleaning. Consultant to ZWM, Sweetser and Associates, praised the protocols and procedures implemented by the HHW team. Sweetser and Associates is finalizing the maintenance observation report, and Zero Waste Marin will share the findings with the HHW team and review any recommended best practices.



The Marin HHW Facility after its quarterly maintenance and cleaning.

Fiscal Year 2025/26 by the numbers at the Marin HHW Facility:

Pounds of HHW Collected (including paint, aerosols, batteries, e-waste, and more)	1,141,677 pounds
Residential Visitors	31,662 Marin residents
Business Visitors	404 Marin businesses
Pounds of Reusable Materials Recovered	20,875 pounds

The last line of the table above summarizing the usage of the Marin HHW Facility refers to the amount of reusable materials recovered in the 2025/26 FY. These materials are identified by the HHW Facility team and moved to the Reuse It Marin Room, where

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residents can access items such as motor oil, latex paint, and oil-based paint at no cost. Reusing materials from the HHW facility helps reduce disposal costs and provides residents with alternatives to buying new products. The total cost for waste management and disposal was \$1,699,767.42, compared to \$1,862,608.91 in FY 2024–25.

Chris Benitez joined the facility the new Program Manager of the Marin Household Hazardous Waste Facility. ZWM extends its appreciation to former Program Manager Joe Suarez and Operations Associate Jorge Guillen for their years of service. Finally, staff want to acknowledge the excellent work of Facility Supervisor Jose Magana and his team—Gustavo Hernandez, George Ramirez, Joe Lucio, Cesar Morales, and Marco Palma—who keep the facility running safely and effectively.

Used Motor Oil Grant Program

For fiscal year 2025/26, CalRecycle awarded the ZWM a Used Oil Payment Program (OPP16) grant in the amount of \$63,629, and Soluna Outreach Solutions managed the grant on behalf of ZWM. These funds were used for grant administration, bilingual outreach promoting proper collection and recycling of used motor oil and oil filters at Marin County events, the radio show *Nuestra Tierra*, and an English as a Second Language (ESL) class called “Family Car.”



Zero Waste Marin Staff at the *Nuestra Tierra* radio show.

Grant funds also supported the purchase of used motor oil and oil filter recycling kits for Marin residents, oil absorbents for Clipper Yacht Harbor and San Rafael Yacht Harbor, and the recycling of used oil and disposal of oil absorbents generated by recreational boaters at Clipper Yacht Harbor.

The amount of used motor oil collected in 2025 increased by approximately 52% compared to 2024. This rise may be attributed to expanded used oil collection at all O'Reilly Auto Parts locations. AutoZone locations also reported increased oil collection, and overall, collections at these Certified Collection Centers (CCCs) remained consistently strong, likely due to vehicle owners who routinely change their motor oil every 3,000 miles. Used oil filter collection increased by approximately 78% compared to last year. This significant increase is likely due to site managers reminding do-it-yourself (DIY) oil changers to recycle their used oil filters when they bring in their used motor oil.

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On July 28, 2026, a Program Advisor/Grant Manager from CalRecycle conducted a site visit to review grant management and program operations. Soluna Outreach Solutions and ZWM staff member Jessica Ruiz led the visit to relevant sites including: the Marin HHW Facility where residents receive free used oil and oil filter kits; O'Reilly Auto Parts at 812 Francisco Blvd W in San Rafael which is one of the certified collection centers for used oil; and Clipper Yacht Harbor, where recreational boaters recycle used oil and used oil absorbents. The Program Advisor/Grant Manager was very pleased with how the agency is using the funds. Their only recommendation was to place a sign at the O'Reilly Auto Parts location indicating that it is a certified collection center.

Zero Waste Programs

The Zero Waste Schools Program

The Zero Waste Schools Program (ZWSP) launched its pilot year with two school campuses in 2015. Over a decade later, the ZWSP has worked with more than 45 public school sites and continues to grow each year. The goal of the Schools Program is to help schools begin or improve recycling and composting programs, become compliant with mandatory California 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 2025-26 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. Examples of support offered to all school campuses include:

- ✓ Site assessments
- ✓ Staff and teacher training
- ✓ School-wide assemblies
- ✓ Classroom presentations
- ✓ Infrastructure support
- ✓ Coordination with Green Teams and student clubs

At the end of each spring semester, the Schools Program provides each school campus with the opportunity to become Certified. The Certification includes 9 core “mandatory” requirements, plus additional “advisable” activities that schools may strive for to further their zero waste efforts. The Certification aims to recognize and honor 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 25/26 Fiscal Year, 28 out of our 47 school sites were certified (60%). The following Certification levels were achieved:

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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.

Repair Fairs

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. Due to positive community response and strong attendance, the Fairs continued during FY 25/26.

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 the process. Repair Fairs aim to keep useful items out of the landfill and promote a culture of reuse and repair.

Some Repair Fairs also include a “swap” component depending on space; at swaps, attendees can drop off clothes, books, or games in good condition that they no longer use, and pick up something “new” to them for free. People do not need to drop off items in order to take something home and are encouraged to take whatever items they will use. Any leftover clothing in usable condition is subsequently donated to a thrift store, and books are donated to Phoenix Used Books, now open as a brick-and-mortar in Larkspur.



A Repair Coach works on fixing an item with an attendee at a Repair Fair.

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Program Results from FY 25/26:

Fair Date	Fair Location	Attendees	Items Repaired	Weight of Items Repaired (lbs)	Weight of Clothes Donated (lbs)	CO ₂ e Avoided (kg)
8/16/25	Marin City Library Lab	100	42	387	316	2,043
9/13/25	San Anselmo	95	49	384	30	2,094
10/4/25	South Novato Library	75	48	340	-	1,406
12/14/25	Novato City Hall	80	55	373	361	2,330
1/10/26	San Rafael Community Center	125	59	375	350	2,271
1/31/26	Sausalito City Hall	120	63	475	473	2,436
3/14/26	San Geronimo Community Center	65	37	410.0	245	2,010
5/2/26	Mill Valley Public Library	75	54	364	58	1,827
5/30/26	San Anselmo Library	80	58	447.5	-	1,763
6/6/26	Corte Madera Community Center	75	55	402	320	2,269
Totals:		890 people	520 items	3,956 lbs	2,152 lbs	20,449 kg CO₂e

Community Focus Groups

Through the marketing and communications contract with Most Likely To, ZWM worked with Think Tank Research to implement English- and Spanish-language focus groups to better understand community attitudes and barriers related to composting and household hazardous waste. The research identified meaningful differences between audiences. English-speaking participants were generally familiar with HHW disposal options but reported lower participation in food scrap composting, while Spanish-speaking participants reported more composting but less awareness and use of proper HHW disposal options.

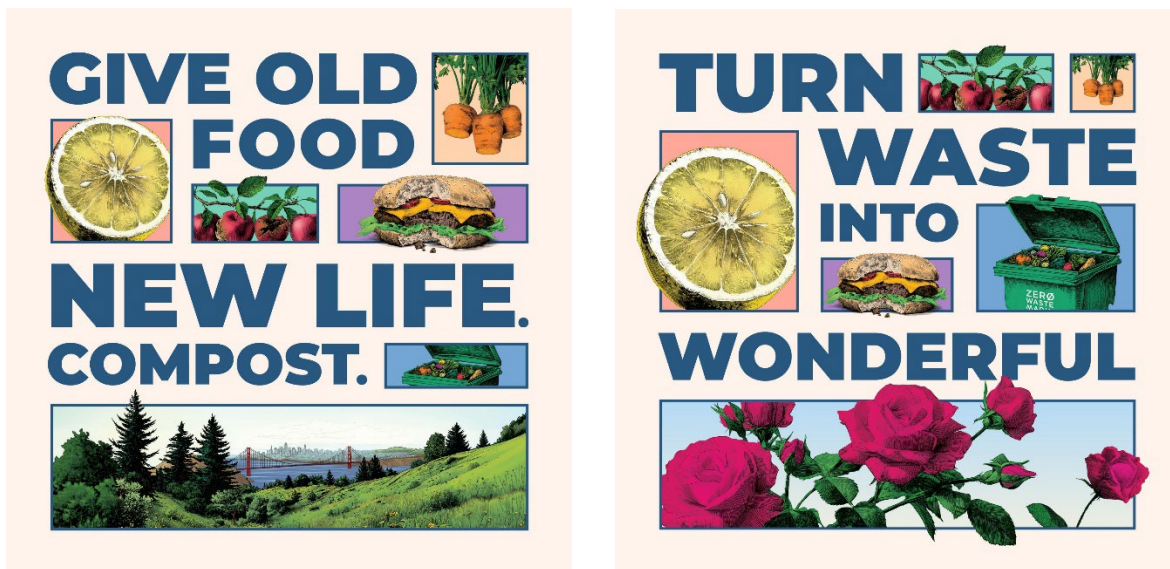
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The groups also provided valuable insight into effective messaging. English-speaking participants preferred practical, non-judgmental messages, while Spanish-speaking participants responded more strongly to messages that clearly communicated consequences. Across both groups, learning that organic waste separation is required by State law was surprising and particularly attention-grabbing.

Participants also recommended that ZWM's website place greater emphasis on our programs, services, and community impact. These findings will help inform future outreach campaigns, website improvements, and more targeted English- and Spanish-language messaging. These findings also informed how we messaged the County-wide call-to-action campaign.

County-Wide Call-To-Action Campaign

During the 25/26 FY Zero Waste Marin continued to work with Most Likely To, a Bay Area-based marketing firm focused on sustainability. Last year's theme focused on encouraging people to compost their food scraps via the message "Be a Composting Rock Star". Most Likely To proposed that ZWM's County-wide campaign continue to focus on food scraps, this time focused on the positive benefits of composting.



The theme for the campaign was "Give Old Food New Life". The bus ads, webpage graphics, and social media stills focused on colorful, eye-catching graphics. These graphics were accompanied by five "User-Generated Content" (UGC) videos on social media. UGC videos are in the style of influencer content, featuring a less formal tone and following the format of popular social media videos. The content was focused on helpful tips to clarify confusing aspects of composting. All videos were created in both English and Spanish.

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The campaign ran from May 25th, 2026 – July 27, 2026 and the results of the campaign's tactics are listed below:

Platform	Metrics
Bus Tail Ads	10 buses with ads
Bus Shelter Ads	12 shelters with ads
SMART Train Platforms	6 platforms with ads
Audio Streaming Ads (English & Spanish)	2,335,725 impressions
YouTube (English & Spanish)	468,821 impressions and 205,901 views
Facebook & Instagram (Spanish videos and static)	1,085,096 impressions and 46,318 video views
Facebook & Instagram (English videos and static)	1,351,505 impressions and 90,172 video views

Events & In-Person Outreach

Zero Waste Marin staff attended a total of 31 community events across the Marin during the 2025/26 Fiscal Year, not including the grocery store tabling efforts. These events included large public events like the Slide Ranch Spring Fling, speaking engagements for community groups, and Earth Day Fairs for students and staff at schools.

Staff developed new ways to engage with event attendees while tabling during the Fiscal Year, including a zero waste lotería game. Lotería is a popular game in Mexico, similar in style to bingo. This offered a new opportunity to engage with community members in a way that was familiar to some and new to others.



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Finally, ZWM continued to loan out ClearStream sorting stations to events to facilitate the proper separation of recyclables, compostables, and landfill materials.

Social Media & Newsletter

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 982 followers (up from 580 followers at the end of last FY). The top locations for followers were San Rafael (12.5%) and Novato (8.9%). The age ranges of followers vary, but the top categories of followers are 35-44 years old (29.1%) and 45-54 years old (23.7%). 78.3% of followers identify as women, while 21.7% identify as men. Instagram continues to be a valuable platform for sharing content and connecting with community members.

ZWM staff also continued to compile monthly newsletter blurbs and social media images with captions to provide to all jurisdictions. 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. 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.

Finally, ZWM transitioned from a quarterly newsletter to a monthly newsletter in order to share helpful messages and content on a more regular basis. A monthly format will also enable ZWM to provide more timely updates on upcoming events. With the transition to monthly newsletters, staff also began to use the Constant Contact platform, moving away from the GovDelivery newsletter platform.

Looking Ahead: Goals for FY 2026/27

Priorities for the upcoming fiscal year include:

- ✓ Completing the Vape Pen Study and using the findings to inform future HHW strategies.
- ✓ Expanding staffing capacity to meet increasing SB 1383 compliance, inspection, enforcement, technical assistance, and reporting responsibilities and to implement SB54, the Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility Law.
- ✓ Work with other Joint Powers Authorities on a regional approach to complying with SB54.

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- ✓ Work with the JPA Board on a better model for operating as an independent agency via the staffing and services agreement with the County of Marin.
- ✓ Expanding the Zero Waste Schools Program to include our first two high schools.
- ✓ Pursuing grant funding and other resources to expand services while reducing impacts on local funding.
- ✓ Implementing diversion strategies informed by the County-wide Waste Characterization Study.
- ✓ Working with CalRecycle to explore a longer-term approach to recovered organic waste product procurement that reduces costs and administrative workload.
- ✓ Continuing to improve access to safe and convenient disposal options for household hazardous and emerging waste streams.