



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Energy Watch Partnership Leads to Cash Savings

Fairfax Market just one of local businesses to benefit from program

San Rafael, CA – You might be enlightened the next time you visit Fairfax Market. The grocery store recently underwent a complete [lighting and refrigeration upgrade](#) and took advantage of a commercial energy efficiency rebate program provided by the [County of Marin Energy Watch Partnership](#).

The store now has new LED lighting throughout and upgraded refrigeration, which is expected to reduce the store's annual electricity usage by an estimated 51 percent.

The [Marin County Community Development Agency Sustainability Team](#) administers the [SmartLights](#) program in Marin County, which provides businesses with no-cost and no-obligation energy evaluations, rebates for making energy-efficient upgrades, and start-to-finish project support. Business owners can use program-affiliated contractors or work with their own contractor and secure rebates for a project by working with SmartLights.

The program is designed to help businesses save money on operating costs and reduce energy use and related greenhouse gas emissions. The Fairfax Market project, conducted this spring and summer, is expected to save an estimated 511,635 kilowatt hours annually and trim annual carbon dioxide emissions by about 145,816 pounds, the equivalent to taking 14.2 cars off the road for one year according to the [Environmental Protection Agency's calculator](#).

Besides saving money on utility bills and reducing energy use and carbon emissions, upgrading lighting to LEDs helps businesses save on maintenance costs. LED bulbs tend to have a lifespan of 10-plus years, so businesses don't need to replace burned bulbs as often as other types of lighting like fluorescent and incandescent. LED bulbs also don't produce as much heat as other types of bulbs, and that can be a benefit on hot summer days.

Fairfax Market also took advantage of the [Pacific Gas & Electric Company's \(PG&E\) 0% On-Bill Financing Program](#). On-Bill Financing

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covers upfront costs for qualifying commercial energy efficiency projects between \$5,000 and \$100,000. The loan is paid back with the monthly energy savings on the customer's utility bill. Once the project is paid off, the customer's bill is reduced to reflect the savings generated by the efficiency project. This is a great tool for businesses that don't have the available capital to put toward energy improvements.

SmartLights is available to almost any type of business with a physical location. The program has served offices, retail spaces, restaurants, art galleries, and more. For instance, Proof Lab, a surf shop and outdoor equipment retailer in Mill Valley, went through SmartLights to secure rebates for [a lighting upgrade](#). Now the store's lighting is 100 percent LED.

If you are a business in Marin looking for ways to reduce your utility bills and improve your lighting, visit the [County Sustainability Team's For Business webpage](#) or call 415-473-2698 to set up a no-cost no-obligation audit.

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