

Solar Panel Reuse and Recycling Phase 1 Final Report

Solar panel installation is on the rise due to new regulations and the need to meet California's progressive climate and sustainability goals. Despite the growing number of panels installed and subsequently being removed, there are currently no options for residents of Santa Barbara County to properly dispose or recycle their old panels. A lack of options for disposal, recycling, and reuse leads residents to improperly dispose of their solar panels.

CPSC, on behalf of Santa Barbara County, conducted outreach in the County to understand the level of interest and desire for a collection event and the baseline expected volume for solar panel collection and processing.

Project Overview

- Conducted **phone interviews** with regional solar panel installers resulting in a 20% response rate.
- Analyzed **building permits** from the County.
- Distributed an **online survey** with ongoing sharing.
- Created **educational materials** such as social media and website content.
- Collected **11 solar panels** for reuse and recycling.
- Hosted a **solar reuse and repair training event**.
- Collaborated with **solar panel stakeholders** within the County.
- Reached out to **city officials, professors, and student organizations**.

Objectives & Evaluation Metrics

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| I. Map solar panel waste generators, collectors, and processors in the zone. | 11 solar panel installers interviewed 54 solar panel installers in the zone 4 solar panel collectors in the zone |
| II. Forge partnerships with regional solar panel repair and recycle businesses. | 3 partnerships 4 solar panel recyclers in the zone |
| III. Develop solar campaign, including education strategy, outreach material, filming media content, social media and website content. | 19,156 social media engagements 4 social media posts |
| IV. Deploy customized solar panel education, including outreach to local businesses, advertisements in local news outlets, and targeted social media. | 1 press release created and sent 4 advertisements placed 8 emails to local university/college professors and organizations 30 direct emails to installers 106 direct phone calls to installers, recyclers, thrift stores, and haulers |
| V. Plan in-person educational event. | 18 event attendees 3 presenters/presentations |
| VI. Media buys, including media content, education material, and event information. | 4 boosted social media posts 2 paid advertisements placed |
| VII. Promote solar panel collection and verify pick-up requests. Collect sample feedstock as needed for educational events. | 3 pick-up requests submitted 11 total solar panels collected 11 collected solar panels used as sample feedstock for event |

- Action Energy
- August Roofing & Solar
- Brighten Solar
- Good Energy Solar
- Mac's Solar
- Wicks Roofing and Solar

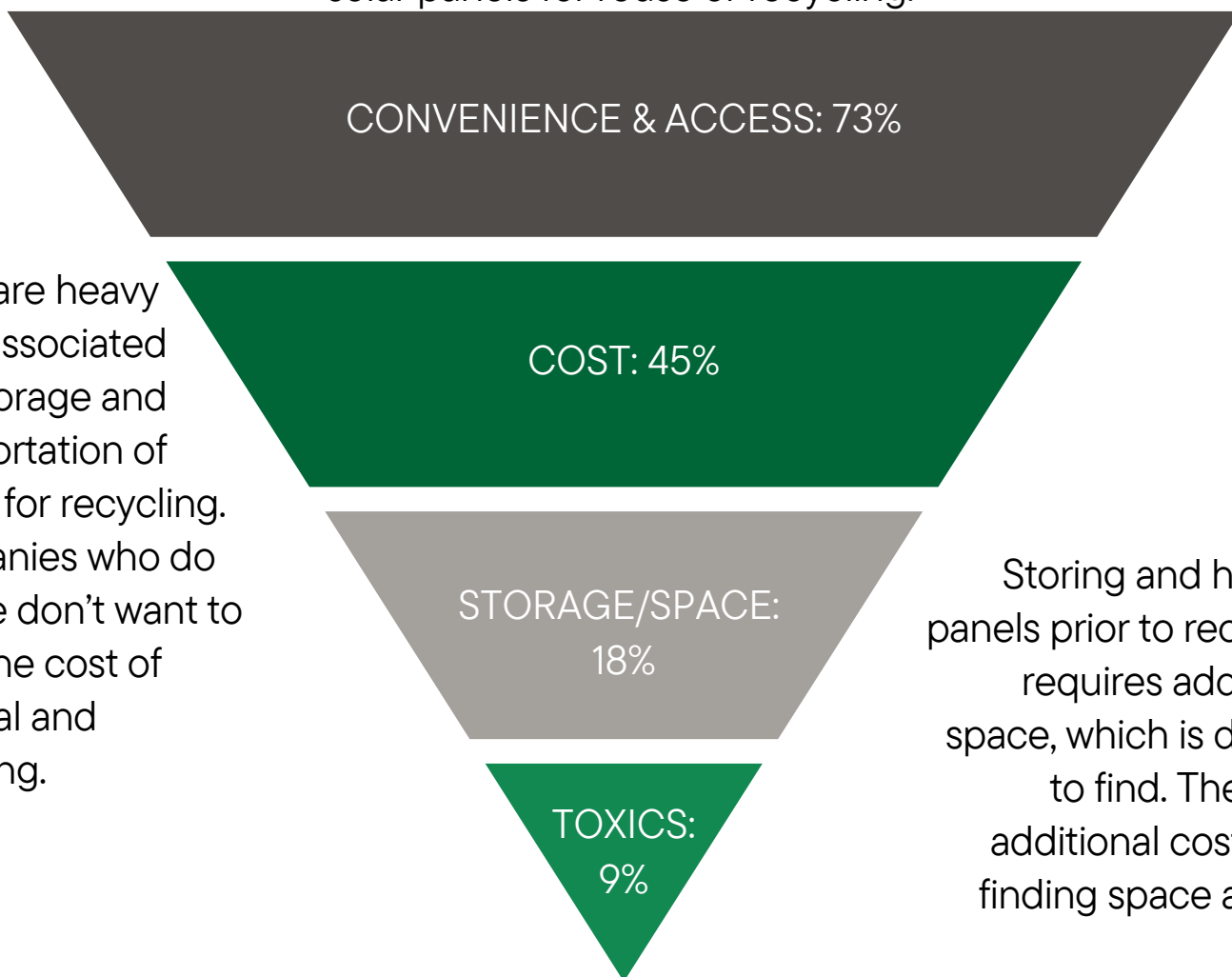
Solar Installers in the County

Top Challenges with Solar Panel Recycling

CPSC Staff conducted interviews with installers across the county and inquired about the biggest challenges they face. CPSC Staff further contacted thrift stores for solar panel reuse and storage inquiry, but found that they were not interested.

- **50% of installers do not provide advice on end-of-life management.**
- **45% of installers resell working panels**

Top Reported Issue: Finding a person or facility that will accept solar panels for reuse or recycling.



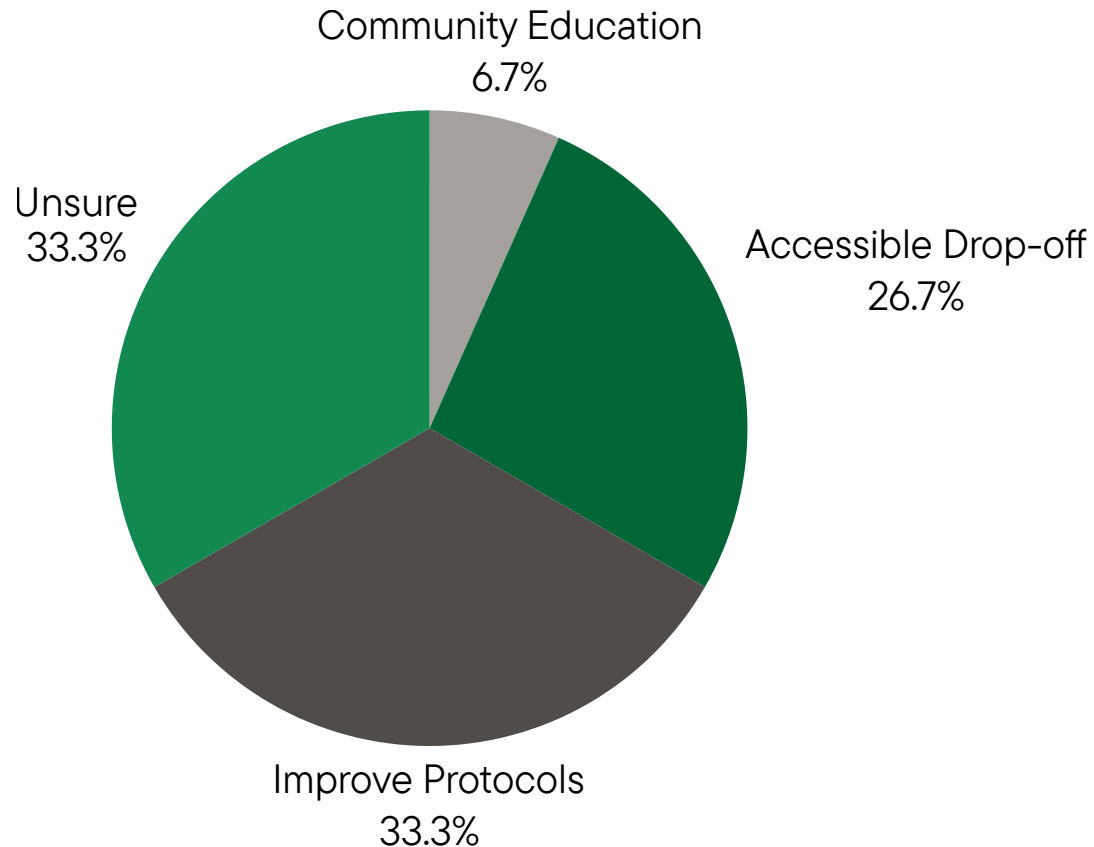
There are heavy costs associated with storage and transportation of panels for recycling. Companies who do recycle don't want to incur the cost of disposal and recycling.

Storing and holding panels prior to recycling requires additional space, which is difficult to find. There are additional costs with finding space as well.

Toxicity of the materials in panels is a concern for handlers and recyclers.

CPSC Staff conducted interviews with installers across the county and asked how they think solar panel recycling can be improved in the county.

Ways to improve Solar Panel Recycling



- 73% of interviewed installers would participate in a solar panel collection event.
- At least 3 businesses were interested in participating in a solar panel reuse event or collaboration.

Event(s)

Installer interviews indicated a need for a local solar panel reuse partner was emphasized as there are currently no such organization in the County.

How do you manage solar panels that are still viable or could be reused?

“Resell using Craigslist.”

“Give them to a charity. I have given viable panels to a church before.”

Examples of Solar Panel Reuse

Partnerships for Events

CPSC formed **five partnerships** through this phase to initiate solar panel collection and conduct a solar panel reuse education event.

Solar Panel Drop-Off Collection Event



**“This was very helpful for me. MarBorg staff made it easy”
- Santa Barbara County Resident dropping off solar panels**

CPSC worked with MarBorg Industries to host solar panel drop-off from October 1st – November 14th. A drop-off appointment request form was created to manage requests. Throughout the month and a half, **a total of 11 solar panels were collected. We further worked with CalMicro who collected the solar panels for reuse testing and recycling post event.**



Solar Panel Reuse & Repair Training Event

CPSC connected with Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria, California to host a solar panel reuse and repair training event. We further partnered with **FabTech, CalMicro, and Original Energy Co** to present at the event. This educational event had a **total of 18 attendees. Attendees received a Certificate of Completion signed by CPSC and Allan Hancock College.**

Outreach/Educational Content

To promote the solar panel collection and education event as well as provide information on reuse/recycling locations in the County, CPSC prepared multiple graphics, reels, an event flyer, a press release, and a resource handout. CPSC further made 106 direct calls and emails to local installers, recyclers, school programs, and local governments to promote the event and collection. **A total of four posts were boosted for \$40 each on both Instagram and Facebook, leading to 19,156 impressions across both platforms.** Although direct calls allow for more response, social media does spread the information to larger audiences more efficiently.

REUSE & RECYCLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLAR PANELS

Residents and/or businesses can contact approved solar panel handlers for reuse and recycling opportunities for their unwanted solar panels.*

Reuse and Recycling



Reuse Only



*Contact the organizations beforehand to determine their availability to receive panels

Solar Panel Recycling

Have unwanted solar panels?

Schedule a FREE drop-off for your unwanted solar panels during the month of October*



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SBSolarCollection>

*Open to residential panels, working or not. Drop-off location disclosed after form submission



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY!

The California Product Stewardship Council and Allan Hancock College are hosting an inaugural solar panel reuse and repair training course and certificate.

Join seasoned solar panel experts for a hands-on workshop and informational presentations.

Register below to attend this free training workshop.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SolarReuseTraining>

Allan Hancock College | 800 S College Dr | Santa Maria, CA 93454 | Room H105 | Parking Lot 6
Friday, November 14th, 2025 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

Proudly serving the Central Coast community since 1882

SANTA MARIA  TIMES

 SUNNY AND NICE 78 • 49 FORECAST, 86 | SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2025 | santamariatimes.com

CPSC placed two ads for the training event with **Santa Maria Times**, featured on the title page.

GOT SOLAR PANELS?

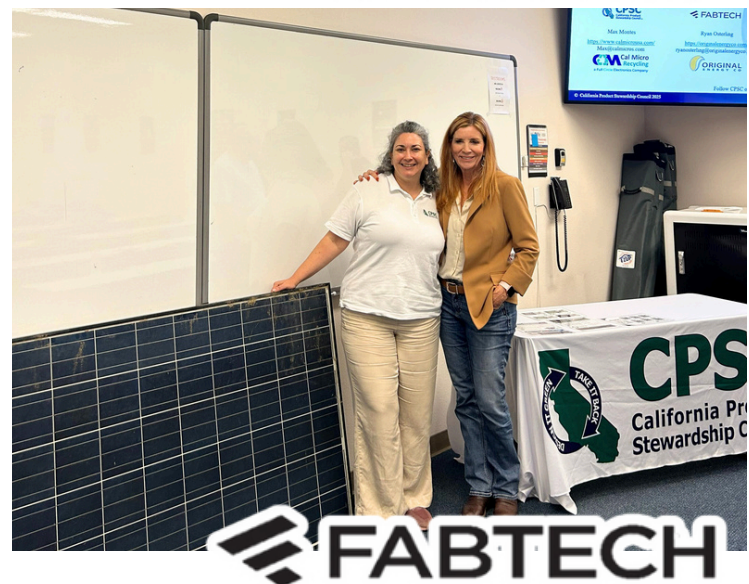
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

IS HOSTING A DROP-OFF EVENT ALL OF OCTOBER

Solar Reuse Training Event



With the use of 11 collected panels and collaborations with local businesses and expert instructors, CPSC and Santa Barbara County hosted a **solar panel reuse and repair training event**, building on curriculum created by the Department of Energy, at the Santa Maria Allan Hancock College location.



Recommendations

- Extend Santa Barbara County solar panel pilot project and **expand education** amongst residents, installers, and recyclers.
- Find and collaborate with a local solar panel collection site.
- Collaborate with **regional partners for collection programs** similar to what was established for textiles.
- Conduct more temporary solar panel collection and education events to build on this pilot's events.
- Support policy that provides **collection convenience, testing for reuse, program transparency, and agency oversight.**
- Support **extended producer responsibility** to implement in a future program.

Resources



Website Updates for
CPSC and SB County

Social Media Campaign



CPSC Solar Panel Resource Map

CPSC Solar Panel Recovery Curriculum