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## **PRESS RELEASE: MONDAY MARCH 4, 2013**

### **U.S. ZERO WASTE BUSINESS COUNCIL LAUNCHES FIRST U.S. THIRD-PARTY ZERO WASTE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

#### ***Whole Foods Market Receives First Zero Waste Certificates***

**CORONA DEL MAR, March 4, 2013**—The U.S. Zero Waste Business Council (USZWBC) announced today that it is launching the first Zero Waste business certification program in the country. The announcement coincides with the organization's issuance of the first Zero Waste certifications to three Whole Foods Market stores in San Diego County.

The goal of businesses participating in the Zero Waste Certification program is to divert all end-use material from the landfill, incineration and the environment, while achieving a minimum of 90 percent diversion based on the standards set by the Zero Waste International Alliance (ZWIA).

The USZWBC audited the waste diversion processes at Whole Foods Market's stores in La Jolla, Hillcrest and Encinitas and found that all three stores are successfully reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. Each of the Whole Foods Market stores received a bronze level Zero Waste certificate for better than 90 percent diversion.

“We are thrilled to launch the new certification program and to verify the achievements of Whole Foods Market. Our goal is not only to provide credibility to Zero Waste businesses, but also to offer the resources needed to create value and save money through Zero Waste practices,” explains Stephanie Barger, founder and executive director of USZWBC. “The U.S. Zero Waste Business Council offers businesses access to recycling markets, peer-to-peer networking, Zero Waste training and conferences.”

“Whole Foods Market is proud to receive the U.S. Zero Waste Business Council’s first Zero Waste certification.” said Dave Sanders, Whole Foods Market’s La Jolla store team leader. “We are proud to partner with USZWBC and help to further its work helping communities become more healthy and sustainable – a value which our company fully supports and is passionate about.”

Whole Foods Market’s stores successfully achieved the first level of certification and are now eligible to pursue the USZWBC’s top Platinum level certification. This can be accomplished by increasing diversion, implementing upstream policies and total participation from all team members, vendors and customers. By working towards these high-level Zero Waste objectives, the business manages its resources more efficiently, economically and non-wastefully.

To date, Whole Foods Market’s three certified stores have excelled in the following areas:

- Commitment to Zero Waste by going beyond 90 percent diversion with focus on reducing and reusing resources
- Emphasis on valuing food by making sure food is donated to those in need, organic, purchased locally and utilized to its highest use
- Team member initiatives to re-sort materials in trash, recycle and compost bins to limit the amount of contamination
- Individual materials separated (such as cardboard, plastic bags and other materials) to provide higher quality resources for reprocessing and better recycling prices
- Initiatives to purchase materials with high recycled content

- Encourage and reward customers for bringing reusable bags

These achievements were accomplished by team members and leadership from their project manager Tom Wright of Sustainable Bizness Practices. John Mackey, Co-CEO, affirmed Whole Foods Market's Zero Waste initiative at a recent speaking engagement in Los Angeles in February.

The USZWC will be hosting its second annual National Zero Waste Business Conference on May 8 and 9 in Cincinnati, Ohio. To register for the conference, go to [www.uszwbc.org](http://www.uszwbc.org).

### **About the U.S. Zero Waste Business Council**

Launched in spring 2012 and headquartered in Corona Del Mar, the USZWBC's mission is to educate, inform and document the performance of Zero Waste Businesses using scientific methods to help businesses and communities become more healthy and sustainable. [www.uszwbc.org](http://www.uszwbc.org)

### **About Zero Waste**

According to the Zero Waste International Alliance ([www.zwia.org](http://www.zwia.org)), Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use. Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.

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