

Yes on M, campaign for a GE-Free Sonoma County  
Press release  
Nov. 9, 2005  
Measure M narrowly fails

Yes on M volunteers celebrated their effort Wednesday even as they mourned the defeat of Measure M.

“We spoke the truth to voters, but were outspent by opponents who ran a campaign of fear and deception,” said campaign coordinator Daniel Solnit. “We are proud of the many hundreds of Yes on M volunteers who stood up for farmers’ rights, our health and our environment.”

Measure M lost by a margin of 44 percent to 56 percent of 140,768 votes cast, according to the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters. Its passage would have meant a 10-year moratorium in Sonoma County on releasing GE organisms into the environment.

“I spoke with hundreds of Sonoma County voters – tabling, phoning, knocking on doors,” said Didi Schlabach of Sebastopol, one of some 500 Yes on M volunteers. “It’s hard to compete with the barrage of misinformation from the opposition. If this had been a fair campaign, we would have won by a landslide.”

The Yes on M campaign was sponsored by the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, the Sierra Club, California Certified Organic Farmers, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, the North Bay Labor Council, Sonoma County Conservation Action and the Small Boat Commercial Salmon Fishermen's Association.

### **What next?**

Yes on M campaign director Dave Henson said the campaign was successful in raising awareness about the risks associated with genetically engineered crops and foods.

“More than 60,000 people voted yes on Tuesday,” he said. “Before this campaign, there were probably only a couple hundred people in our county who had a strong opinion on GE contamination. That’s an incredible step forward.”

The Yes on M campaign also gathered a core of volunteers who will remain engaged in important issues, Henson said.

“We had at least 500 volunteers, the vast majority of which had never been involved in an issue campaign before,” he said. “People are still very excited about keeping our crops and environment free from GE contamination, keeping our food safe, and creating sustainable agriculture in Sonoma County. There’s an enormous commitment to taking the energy of this campaign and turning it into positive social change.”

“I think we did a tremendous job of educating voters,” said volunteer Jan Jackson of Windsor. “I worked with a lot of people who don’t normally get into this sort of thing. But this was so important to them that they gave many hours.”

Jackson said she remains positive.

“I’m determined to keep going,” she said. “If we had another campaign starting tomorrow, I’d do it in a heartbeat.”

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