Energy Efficiency Loading Order

The Energy Efficiency Spectrum
There are many steps we can take to improve the efficiency in our buildings. These steps range in price, effectiveness, complexity and appropriate time of implementation during a project (i.e. in the design phase for a new building versus a simple retrofit). It's important to consider which measures provide the best return on investment. Solar panels and high performance windows can help make your home more sustainable and efficient, but they also carry a higher price point.

Start with the Low-Hanging Fruit - $
The cheapest and most easily installed home efficiency strategy is to upgrade all lighting to efficient LED bulbs, install smart power strips to reduce "vampire loads" when your appliances aren't in use, and install water-saving faucet aerators and shower heads.

LED light bulbs use around 90% less energy than a comparable incandescent bulb, don't produce heat when in use, have a 10 year+ lifetime, and are available in various temperatures (colors) and light intensities. Newer LED models can be programmed to work with home energy management software.

Insulation and Air Sealing - $$
Most homes in Marin were built before 1970 and have not been upgraded to modern building standards. Ensuring your home is properly air sealed and has adequate insulation levels offers the biggest bang for the buck (compared to a new furnace and efficient windows) for improving efficiency and comfort levels.

Bigger Ticket Items - Reduce Then Produce - $$$
When you are ready to go solar you will want to purchase a system that covers your electricity use. Reducing your demand prior to installing solar allows you to save money by purchasing fewer panels to cover your homes electricity needs.

Resources
For information on direct install and rebate programs for Marin residents, visit: www.marinsustainability.org