

Glossary

Dematerialization

When it comes to sustainable living, dematerialization has more than one potential meaning. First, it refers to the economic concept of doing more with less. This involves reducing the amount of materials required to serve certain functions. You see it in many forms in the world of economics from using fewer materials in product packaging to making the move from actual documents to virtual copies of documents and even books.

Ethical Consumerism

The way consumers make their voices heard is by carefully choosing where their dollars are spent. We are a consumer-driven society and one of the most positive forms of positive activism consumers today can pursue is ethical consumerism, which means you make thoughtful ethical buying decisions and focus on moral purchasing choices, such as the decision to buy "green."

Greenwashing

Greenwashing is what happens when organizations and businesses try to look like they're behaving in an environmentally responsible manner or producing products that are "green" when in fact they are not. Some would argue that many businesses invest more time, energy, and money trying to generate and maintain the appearance of being green than it would cost to actually adopt greener policies and practices to begin with

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

The short explanation is that VOCs are organic (carbon-based) compounds that are easily transformed into vapors or gasses. They can be emitted or released from a wide range of products including paints, oils, glues, solvents, natural gasses, and more. They have a profound impact

on air quality indoors and outs. In fact, most air quality alerts issued are in response to smog resulting from VOCs. The health consequences of prolonged exposure to VOCs is significant, as is the impact it has on Earth's delicate ozone layer and the protection it provides.

Source Reduction

Refers to efforts to reduce the amount of waste produced by changing plans and designs so that less waste is left over. This refers to a wide range of things from packaging and intended use of items to using fewer toxins in the creation of products, or extending the life of products and their packaging. One prime example would be active efforts to lighten the plastic used in water bottles and their packaging.