

Bay Area Building: What is our Environmental Impact?

Housing generates lots of waste. *We can have more - with less.*

- ❑ Buildings and their construction are responsible for nearly *one-half* of US energy use.
- ❑ More than 15% of the wood delivered to a US construction site is never actually used. Instead, it's hauled to the landfill as waste.
- ❑ Building a typical 4000 SF house in the Bay Area
 - ❑ Uses the equivalent of three acres of forest
 - ❑ Produces approximately 26 tons of construction waste.¹

We are prolific consumers. *We can do more - with less.*

- ❑ The average European uses half as much energy as a US resident; Japanese use one quarter the energy. US residents make up 5% of the earth's population but use 25% of its resources.
- ❑ Each US resident consumes the equivalent of about one ancient tree on average — every year.

Our appetite for housing harms the environment. *It doesn't have to.*

- ❑ The EPA has listed all Bay Area creeks as impaired due to the pesticide diazinon.
- ❑ Half the earth's forests are gone, and growing demand for wood threatens those that remain.²

And conventional practices can harm our health ... *Green materials don't.*

- ❑ Sixty percent of the ozone-depleting substances used annually in the U.S. are used in building construction and systems.³
- ❑ Formaldehyde — a poisonous gas and probable carcinogen — is used in a variety of building products, including MDF, particleboard, glues, carpet, insulation, plywood, vinyl flooring and cabinets.
- ❑ We spend 90% of our time indoors, and indoor air is 2-3 times more polluted than outside air.⁴

Our choices can make the difference.

¹ NAHB

² Natural Resources Defense Council

³ EPA's Alternative Emissions & Reductions Branch, Global Programs Division, 2000

⁴ American Lung Association

