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# Environmental Impact of “Disposable Housing”

## Major contradiction in current emphasis on sustainability

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### Summary

- Because houses impose a large environmental burden when they are constructed or dismantled, it is necessary to understand the problem from a viewpoint separate from energy-saving performance when viewed in the context of sustainability. The number of housing starts in Japan is large, and the tendency to treat housing as a "disposable commodity," discarding it in a short period of time, may be increasing the burden on the global environment more than necessary.
- Usually, because the number of houses owned by a single family is limited, it is believed that the supply of new houses will be curtailed if the distribution of existing houses expands. In addition, the actual useful life may be extended if home owners treat their houses with care, with a view to selling older houses. Therefore, it makes sense for the government to expand the market for pre-owned homes from the standpoint of responding to environmental problems and increasing housing stock.
- However, while a number of measures have been put forward, the distribution share of pre-owned homes has not expanded much. One reason for this might be the buyer's emphasis on new housing. If this is the case, what is needed for improvement is a change in consumer awareness.
- To this end, the Ministry of the Environment and other bodies are expected to take the lead in communicating messages directly to consumers from the viewpoint of the global environment, calling on them to "make good products, take good care of them, and use them carefully for a long time."

#### Attention

This report is a summary translation. The official document is only in Japanese.