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**FROM BASELINE TO ACTION:
A PRACTICAL SUSTAINABILITY SERIES BY
PATH ZERO**

Common Sustainability Myths That Hold Suppliers Back

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Common Sustainability Myths That Hold Suppliers Back

Retailers are no longer debating whether sustainability data matters – they are preparing to collect it. Under California Statute 253, covered retailers will be required to report emissions using 2026 data, with supplier requests expected in Q1 2027.

That means suppliers need to be tracking now, even if formal requests haven't arrived yet. Many suppliers hesitate – not because they can't act, but because common myths create delay. That delay now creates risk.

MYTH 1

“Sustainability is too expensive for companies like ours.”



REALITY

Retailers are not asking for capital-intensive sustainability projects. They're asking for data.

Most early requests focus on:

- Energy and fuel use
- Freight and logistics
- Materials and waste
- Activity data used to calculate Scope 3 emissions

Scope 1, 2 and 3 Emissions: A Plain-English Guide for Suppliers

Retailers often ask suppliers for Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions data. Here's what that means without jargon.

Scope 1: Emissions You Control Directly

These come from fuel you burn yourself, such as:

- ➔ **Natural gas or propane used on-site**
- ➔ **Fuel used in company-owned vehicles or equipment**

If you pay for the fuel and burn it, it's usually Scope 1.



Scope 2: Emissions From Purchased Energy

These come from the energy you buy and use, most commonly:

- ➔ **Electricity**

Even though emissions happen at the power plant, they count toward your footprint because you're using the energy.



Scope 3: Emissions Up and Down Your Supply Chain

These are indirect emissions tied to your business activities, such as:

- ➔ **Freight and transportation**
- ➔ **Purchased materials**
- ➔ **Waste disposal**

Scope 3 is where most supplier emissions live and where retailers need the most data.





These metrics already exist in invoices, utility bills, shipping records and purchasing data. In many cases, measuring them reveals inefficiencies that reduce costs. Sustainability reporting starts with visibility – not spending.

Systems like Shop! Path Zero Emissions are designed to make this manageable in cost and labor, usable by an administrator or intern and produce the Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 data retailers require.

MYTH 2

“We need certifications before we can respond.”



REALITY

Certifications matter when they are relevant and credible, not when they are numerous.

Retailers want confidence that data:

- Follows a recognized methodology
- Is collected consistently
- Is validated beyond pure self-reporting

Industry-specific programs like Shop! Path Zero Benchmark are valuable because they align with how suppliers actually operate and include independent third-party verification. That verification helps retailers trust supplier data without conducting their own audits.

The goal is data credibility, not a long list of certifications.

MYTH 3

“If our data isn’t perfect, we shouldn’t share it.”



REALITY

Retailers expect estimates, especially for Scope 3.

Emissions reporting is built on assumptions and improving accuracy over time. What matters is transparency, such as:

- Clear boundaries
- Documented assumptions
- Consistent methodology

“No data” is a problem. Estimated data with notes is normal and expected.

MYTH 4

“We’ll get accused of greenwashing.”



REALITY

Greenwashing comes from exaggeration, not disclosure.

Retailers are asking for calculations and documentation – not marketing language. Straightforward reporting builds trust.

MYTH 5
“We’re too small to matter.”



REALITY
Smaller suppliers are where Scope 3 data comes from.

If you supply a retailer subject to CA Statute 253, your data is part of their obligation, regardless of your size.

The Bottom Line

Retailers will request 2026 Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 data in early 2027. Suppliers who start tracking now – and can provide reasonable estimates, clear documentation and relevant validation – will be far easier to work with when those requests arrive.

You don’t need perfect data.

You don’t need every certification.

You do need to be ready. ◀



ABOUT PATH ZERO

Shop! Association offers a suite of Path Zero sustainability programs designed to help members document, track, and improve performance—building credible, measurable results across operations and projects.

Path Zero Emissions: An easy-to-use platform for tracking Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions—capturing utilities, waste, water, and operational data in alignment with the GHG Protocol for reporting needs, including California SB 253.

Path Zero Element: Transforms architectural drawings and specifications into material quantities and embodied carbon—capturing store-specific variations across design, fixtures, and displays for scalable, repeatable reporting.

Path Zero Benchmark: Evaluates sustainability performance across 135 qualitative and quantitative data points—delivering industry benchmarking and recognized ratings supported by third-party assurance.

Path Zero Consulting: Provides hands-on support for sustainability strategy, facility and program audits, target setting, and implementation planning.

Each program can be used independently or together, depending on your organization's goals and reporting needs.

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ABOUT SHOP! ASSOCIATION

Shop!, the global trade association dedicated to enhancing retail environments and experiences, embraces a culture of inclusion where diverse voices are active in all aspects of our organization. This supports an environment in which all individuals feel respected and are treated fairly, and different viewpoints, opinions, thoughts, and ideas are encouraged and embraced. We proudly maintain the highest standards of ethics and transparency.

Our Purpose: Empowering our members to innovate at retail.

Our Mission: From ideation through implementation, Shop will engage our diverse array of members with education, insights and events that enable them to co-create innovation that evolves retail worldwide.

Our Vision: Shop's members will shape the evolution of retail.

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