

NEW-LIGHTBULB-HNS BAN-THE-BULB COALITION AIMS AT CONGRESS

By JUDY HOLLAND
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WASHINGTON _The world's largest lighting manufacturer is joining with environmental groups to press Congress and state governments to phase out the incandescent Thomas Edison light bulb, which has been around for more than 125 years.

Representatives of Philips Electronics Corp., the manufacturer, and environmental advocates plan to announce Wednesday that they have formed an alliance to lobby Congress for laws requiring improved energy efficiency for light bulbs. New light bulb rules would likely boost sales for Philips and satisfy environmental groups pushing for lower electricity consumption as a way of reducing carbon dioxide emissions blamed for global warming.

The criticism of incandescent bulbs has irked General Electric Co., the top U.S. manufacturer of light bulbs. Efforts to ban incandescent light bulbs have been bolstered by heightened concerns over global warming, fueled by former Vice President Al Gore's popular documentary film *An inconvenient Truth*. The film won an Oscar at the Academy Awards last month. Philips and the green groups say more energy-efficient bulbs would cut electricity consumption and lower emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. They prefer:

- Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL), bulbs that often look like cork screws and are four-times more efficient than the old model
- Halogen lights that are 30 to 50 percent more efficient than incandescent bulbs
- Light-emitting diodes, referred to as LEDs, that are used in cross walk and exit signs

GE Consumer & Industrial, the GE unit that includes appliances, lighting and electrical distribution, bristles at the anti-incandescent clamor.

"There's no need to ban a particular technology," says Kim Freeman, a spokeswoman for GE Consumer & Industrial in Louisville, Ky. "We know we can use innovation to get energy-efficient incandescent lighting."

Freeman says GE expects by 2010 to roll out an incandescent light bulb that is twice as efficient as current incandescent bulbs, and by 2012 a bulb that is four times as efficient and comparable in use to CFL bulbs. She warns that CFL bulbs have a small amount of mercury in them "small enough to fit on the tip of a ballpoint pen" and that a national policy for disposing safely of these new-age bulbs is needed.

"We want to work with Congress to provide awareness of responsible CFL recycling," Freeman says. She says the CFL bulbs should be 'wrapped up in plastic' before being tossed out.

Randall Moorhead, vice president of government affairs for Philips Electronics North America Corp., said the coalition wants to set bulb efficiency standards for bulbs, not ban incandescent bulbs.

“If (GE) can make a more efficient incandescent light, Philips welcomes that development and it is all the more reason why they should join us to rid the market place of these energy-hogging inefficient lights,” he said.

Philips will end the manufacture of incandescent bulbs “if governments around the world will set policies to make our lighting more efficient,” Moorhead said.

Kathleen Rogers, president of Earth Day Network, a global environmental public policy group, says environmental groups are going to push “extremely hard at the state and federal level to ban inefficient bulbs of any kind.”

“It behooves any manufacturer to fast-forward their production of energy efficient lighting products,” Rogers says. “If a company isn't ready to dump inefficient technology in favor of new energy-saving technology when it has had ample opportunity to develop it, then like other industries that can't keep up, it's going to go the way of the dinosaurs.”

Rogers says if “we all switch to energy efficient lighting, consumers will save billions of dollars and prevent millions of tons of carbon emissions.”

The CFL is supposed to save money because its lifespan is 6,000 to 9,000 hours, compared to 1,000 hours for a traditional light bulb, and uses less than 20 percent of the energy, which means an 80 percent reduction in electricity costs.