



GREEN LIGHTING CAMPAIGN NEWS



-----FIRST EDITION-----

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Stop CFL Giveaways from Turning into Mass Throwaways, say Groups; Earth Day Pledge Made to Consider Toxicity and Other Concerns

WASHINGTON, DC– Environmental groups from New York to California are taking a pledge to consider only the “greenest” CFLs when making purchases for office use and during compact fluorescent lamp giveaways. The new “Green Lighting Campaign” intends to promote more sustainable lighting practices such as recycling, rather than throwing lamps containing mercury in the trash.

Toxic levels in lamps have created concerns when the lamps are produced, transported, installed, broken or disposed of, say advocates. Absent mercury content reductions and manufacturing dosing improvements, global mercury use will increase with expanding fluorescent lighting use, and negate dramatic mercury reductions anticipated in most other sectors

Offered by a coalition of groups, the pledge and guidance have other organizations considering steps to include more than energy efficiency when determining their lighting purchases.

“Compact fluorescent lamps are one the brightest idea since Edison invented the light bulb,” said Michael Bender, Director of the Mercury Policy Project. “Yet CFL giveaways should not wind up as mass throwaways. And why buy higher mercury lamps when low mercury lamps perform just as well?”

Manufacturing processes that expose workers and release excess mercury to the environment are supplying millions of CFLs to US markets today, says Bender. He also notes that lamp toxicity, longevity, and lighting quality and end of life disposal concerns also factor into campaign’s goals.

“As we choose compact fluorescent lamps to combat global warming, we can and should reduce toxic pollution at the same time,” said Bill Magavern, Director of Sierra Club California. “The Green Lighting Campaign seeks to protect households and workers from both mercury pollution and climate change.”

Millions of lamps are purchased every year, a decision typically made by a handful of people. Many work with or in non-profit groups, who then distribute them to the public. Lamp giveaways are held to help educate and motivate the public around issues of energy efficiency and climate change. By making these purchases influence more than the climate change issue, the Green Lighting Campaign seeks to influence the overall market for lighting products.

“Organizations that choose low-mercury and lead-free CFLs for their giveaway programs can effectively combat climate change in a way that protects workers and consumers from these persistent toxic chemicals,” said Alicia Culver, Director of the Green Purchasing Institute. “By ordering ‘green’ light bulbs thousands at a time, they also reward manufacturers who offer the most environmentally sound products in the marketplace,” she added.

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Groups taking the Earth Day pledge include the Natural Resources Council of Maine, New York Public Interest Research Group, Mercury Policy Project, the Green Purchasing Institute, Illinois Environmental Council, Mercury Free Wisconsin, National Pollution Prevention Roundtable, and Sierra Club.

For more information, see: www.mercurypolicy.org.

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