



The Key to America's Future Greatness is Not a New Light Bulb

It took one man, working tirelessly in his private laboratory, to light up the world. The invention of the electric light bulb by Thomas A. Edison was the work of an individual, not a collective, not the government. Yet its impact on the world was greater, more productive, and more beneficial than anything that 10,000 government bureaucrats could dream up. The purpose of the government was to secure Edison's God-given rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It was not to help him invent anything. Its purpose was to leave him alone to do what he did best: invent new wonders that changed the world.



But today, the government can't keep its hands off anything, including Edison's great invention. Through a new law entitled "The 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act," the government has mandated phasing out Edison's remarkable invention and replacing it with a more expensive Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb (CFL), which according to lighting engineer Howard Brandston, poses a risk to public health and safety. He testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on March 11, stating the following:

The compact fluorescent lamp contains mercury. One gram of mercury will pollute a two-acre pond. This 2007 light bulb standard brings a deadly poison into every residence in our nation.

We do not have enough knowledge of the potential consequences of being continuously exposed to the electromagnetic field that compact florescent lamps emit. There are millions of people in this country with lupus, an auto-immune disease. Exposure to low doses of light from these lamps causes a severe rash.

Brandston spoke in favor of the Better Use of Light Bulbs Act, a measure which would have overturned elements of the 2007 law which gives bureaucrats in Washington the incentive to create light-bulb police to monitor every home in America to force compliance with the bidding of politicians and their bureaucratic minions.

As a result of that 2007 law, factories in the United States that manufactured Edison's incandescent bulbs have closed. Where are the new bulbs being manufactured? You guessed it: China. In California, utilities are actually subsidizing the purchase of the new bulbs and giving them out to their customers at low cost. According to an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (1/19/11):

No state has done more to promote compact fluorescent lamps than California. On Jan. 1, the state began phasing out sales of incandescent bulbs, one year ahead of the rest of the nation. A federal law that takes effect in January 2012 requires a 28% improvement in lighting efficiency for



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on September 28, 2011

conventional bulbs in standard wattages. Compact fluorescent lamps are the logical substitute for traditional incandescent light bulbs, which won't be available in stores after 2014.

California utilities have used ratepayer funds to subsidize sales of more than 100 million of the bulbs since 2006, most of them made in China. It is part of a comprehensive state effort to use energy-efficiency techniques as a substitute for power production. Subsidized bulbs cost an average of \$1.30 in California versus \$4 for bulbs not carrying utility subsidies.

California's experience is notable because energy experts have placed high hopes on compact fluorescent lamps. Often spiral-shaped, they screw into existing light sockets and offer energy savings of about 75% over traditional incandescent light bulbs.

Many nations are relying on them to help cut emissions from power plants and stretch electricity supplies further. The United Nations says 8% of global greenhouse-gas emissions are linked to lighting, and that adoption of compact fluorescent lights could cut pollution.

As anyone can see, the new bulbs are part of the New World Order's intent to control how energy is used everywhere, including our homes. Saving energy is more important than individual freedom. But as usual, government's heavy-handed good intentions have their dangerous consequences. According to an article in the *Los Angeles Times* (4/7/11):

The nation's accelerating shift from incandescent lighting to a new generation of energy-efficient bulbs is raising an environmental concern: the release of tons of mercury every year.

The most popular new bulb — the compact fluorescent light bulb, or CFL — accounts for a quarter of new bulb sales. Each contains up to 5 milligrams of mercury, a potent neurotoxin that's on the worst-offending list of environmental contaminants.

Demand for CFL bulbs is growing as government mandates for energy-efficient lighting take effect, yet only about two percent of residential consumers and one-third of businesses recycle the new bulbs, according to the Association of Lighting and Mercury Recyclers.

As a result, U.S. landfills are releasing more than four tons of mercury annually into the atmosphere and storm water runoff, according to a study in the *Journal of the Air and Waste Management Association*.

I thought these bulbs were supposed to last forever. So how come so many of them are winding up in landfills? And what is the government going to do about the mercury contaminant? We never had to worry about contaminants with Mr. Edison's ingenious light bulb. But when politicians and bureaucrats try to improve the world they usually wind up ruining it.

When are we going to get the government out of the business of "improving" mankind? That was supposedly the aim of the communists in Russia. Their improvement consisted of constructing slave-labor camps, creating widespread poverty, and building such monuments to engineering proficiency as Chernobyl.

But here in America we are just beginning to enjoy the benefits of our government's interest in our well-being. ObamaCare is a giant step in that direction. Benign bureaucrats, with only your best interests at heart, will decide what's good for you. You won't be able to figure it out for yourself with the help of your private physician. Socialists are control freaks. They are not happy unless they are controlling other people's lives. And they've discovered that the energy "crisis" is the easiest way to convince gullible Americans that they must be controlled for their own good.



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We should all remember that it is Congress that creates new bureaucracies to implement every new social program it enacts. I recall a well-known legislator in our Massachusetts Senate boasting of how many laws and programs he had helped enact in his long political career. Would that he had enacted none!

I don't object to anyone inventing a better light bulb. But I do object to having it forced on me, especially since it contains a dangerous contaminant. A friend of mine who had mercury placed in his fillings by a well-meaning dentist, suffered from horrible migraines for years until he learned that it was the mercury that was making his life so miserable. And so, at great expense, he had the mercury removed and now enjoys much better health.

Republicans in Congress tried to get rid of the new bulb regulations, but failed. According to the *New York Times* (7/12/11):

House Republicans on Tuesday failed to advance a measure that would repeal regulations that increase efficiency standards for light bulbs, rules that they have assailed as an example of government overreach.

But Democrats, despite being in the minority in the House, were able to defeat the repeal on a vote of 233 to 193 because the measure was brought up under rules that require a two-thirds majority for passage.

The Democratic whip, Steny Hoyer of Maryland, said Republicans were wrong to propose the repeal at a time when Congress should be focusing on creating jobs and on the debt-limit negotiations. "By bringing misguided bills like this one to the floor instead of a comprehensive jobs plan, it is clear that House Republicans are still in the dark," Mr. Hoyer said in a statement titled "Not the Brightest Idea."

Republicans have also said the new types of bulbs are too expensive. Prices range from about \$1.50 for a halogen incandescent to \$20 for a light-emitting diode, or LED, bulb, which is supposed to last 10 years. Regular bulbs today cost about 35 cents each.

Democrats countered that the higher cost of the new bulbs would be offset by savings on the energy bills of consumers and cited Congressional testimony from Kathleen Hogan, the Energy Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency. Using the new bulbs could save households about \$50 a year by 2015, Ms. Hogan said. Nationally, consumer savings could be \$6 billion a year.

In a previous article, I wrote that it takes only 545 legislators and judges to ruin the greatest nation that has ever existed. Our freedoms are being whittled away by politicians and bureaucrats who are willingly converting this free nation into a slave nation. Ms. Hogan is convinced that Americans would rather save \$50 dollars a year than keep the freedom to choose what kind of bulbs they want. That is the mentality that is destroying America, and she will be there until a new conservative president kicks her out.



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