

(March 28, 2007) Congressmen unveil BRIGHT idea for new light bulbs

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Call it a BRIGHT idea.

That's what two congressmen are calling their proposal, officially known as the Bulb Replacement in Government with High-efficiency Technology Energy Savings Act.

"From now on, it'll be known as the BRIGHT Energy Savings Act, for obvious reasons," declared Rep. Dan Lipinski, D-III., who is sponsoring the measure along with Rep. Bob Inglis, R-S.C.

The idea is simple: an estimated 3 million old-fashioned light bulbs in federal buildings everywhere will be gradually replaced by new, high-tech bulbs, under a congressional mandate directed to the General Services Administration.

A new bulb is estimated to save \$74 in energy costs over the typical lifetime cost of an old-style bulb, for a savings of more than \$200 million after one full round of replacement bulbs are installed.

"It's a win for the environment, a win for national security and a win for American taxpayers," said Lipinski, a second-term conservative Democrat from Chicago's southwest suburbs.

Inglis said participating buildings will experience a 7 percent reduction in energy consumption.

"It's not going to solve the energy problems of the country, but it's a start," he said.

Sponsors said one type of bulb that could be used is the Energy Star-certified Compact Fluorescent Light bulb, also known as a CFL. It is estimated to use 75 percent less energy and last 8 to 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

The measure was introduced in the House on Tuesday, with more than 30 co-sponsors, and it is destined for the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, where the chairman, Rep. James L. Oberstar, D-Minn., is expected to be an ally, according to Lipinski.

By starting with GSA-owned buildings, it is thought the legislation is starting with the least controversial possibility, he said, adding there is not a consensus in Congress for mandatory bulb changes in the private sector.