

(June 13, 2007) Recycling's Good For the Environment, Too

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By Emily Heil,

Roll Call Staff

It's been said that there are no new ideas under the sun. Better make that under the eco-friendly light bulbs, too, now that one bipartisan duo is harrumphing that another copied its campaign to replace energy-wasting bulbs with greener ones.

A bipartisan pair, Reps. Dan Lipinski (D-Ill.) and Bob Inglis (R-S.C.), introduced legislation in March that would swap the government's 3 million or so old-school (read: inefficient) light bulbs with newer, fancier (read: energy-efficient) ones. The sponsors sent out three "Dear Colleague" letters and attracted more than 70 co-sponsors.

The idea was such a bright one, apparently, that another two Members, Reps. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) and Jane Harman (D-Calif.), came up with their own version, sending a June 7 "Dear Colleague" letter vowing to introduce an amendment to every appropriations bill requiring that government agencies switch their bulbs.

Harman Chief of Staff John Hess told HOH there was no copying intended. "We were aware of the Lipinski-Inglis legislation," but his boss and company thought it was a novel idea to try to amend every spending bill with light-bulb language, he said. "We weren't aware of a similar strategy — if it was out there, that's our oversight, but we're just happy there's so much interest in the issue."

Lipinski Chief of Staff Jason Tai told HOH he sees the idea recycling as a compliment of sorts. "The more the merrier in order to move this ball down the field," he said.