

## (July 19, 2007) Lipinski Testimony on BRIGHT Bill

### TESTIMONY

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U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management

Hearing: "Federal Leadership by Example on Energy Conservation"

July 19, 2007

Today Americans are rightly concerned about the impact of foreign energy dependence on our national security and the effects of global climate change on the planet. I applaud Chairwoman Norton for holding this hearing because I firmly believe that the government should lead by example. But when it comes to energy conservation, the federal government - because of its size - also has a significant direct impact on energy usage and the environment. That is why earlier this year, my colleague Bob Inglis and I introduced the Bulb Replacement In Government with High-efficiency Technology Energy Savings Act, known as the BRIGHT Energy Savings Act.

The BRIGHT Energy Savings Act will help us to address both environmental and energy issues by cutting down significantly on energy usage and emissions of global warming gases by the federal government, while at the same time saving millions of taxpayer dollars. It's a win for the environment, a win for national security, and a win for American taxpayers.

Our legislation directs the General Services Administration (GSA) to replace currently-used low efficiency light bulbs with high efficiency bulbs whenever a bulb is replaced or installed in a federal building.

The impact of the BRIGHT Energy Savings Act could be significant. The GSA owns approximately 1,800 facilities with about 174 million square feet of space. At least 3 million lights throughout the federal government could be upgraded to high efficiency bulbs under our legislation.

The type of high efficiency bulb that would most likely be used today is the Energy Star-certified Compact Fluorescent Light bulb, also known as a CFL. CFLs use approximately 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs to provide the same amount of light and they last approximately 8-10 times longer. Replacing an ordinary bulb with a comparable CFL saves up to \$74 in energy costs over the bulb's lifetime. It's easy to see that hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars can be saved by implementing this bill.

And by converting just one conventional 60-Watt incandescent bulb to a 13-Watt CFL of the same brightness, we can prevent the burning of 110 lbs. of coal and the release of 450 lbs. of climate changing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. If the federal government's actions lead every American household to swap just one bulb for a CFL, the country would save \$8 billion in energy costs, prevent the burning of 30 billion pounds of coal, and keep two million cars worth of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the atmosphere. The average home has more than 30 light fixtures. Think of the possibilities.

As an engineer by training, I am fascinated by the promise of new and emerging technologies and what they mean for our future. In addition to CFLs, new halogen technologies are expected to become commercially available later this year. Further down the road, LEDs (light-emitting diodes) will revolutionize the lighting industry, leading to vastly more efficient lighting and the prospect of bulbs that do not burn out. Much of this technology represents American ingenuity and innovation, and provides hope for a brighter future. And with the federal government purchasing large quantities of these high efficiency bulbs, this next generation of technology will be less costly to put in American homes.

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I am pleased that a bipartisan group of more than 80 Members have joined us on the BRIGHT Energy Savings Act, and

the language of the bill was recently adopted into the Committee's Transportation Energy Security and Climate Change Mitigation Act of 2007. Now we need to move this important legislation forward.

In addition, Representatives Bob Inglis, Ed Markey, and Mark Kirk joined me in amending the Fiscal year 2008 Defense Authorization bill with similar language, requiring the Department of Defense to use energy efficient lighting to the fullest extent deemed feasible. When you consider that the DOD has over 240,000 buildings in the U.S. alone, it is clear that this is a practical way to make significant progress in reducing energy consumption, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, and saving taxpayer dollars.

Finally, Representative Inglis and I have worked with Representatives Jane Harman and Fred Upton to amend every House Appropriations bill that has come to the floor this year with similar language requiring the use of high efficiency bulbs. Combined, all of our efforts will apply a high efficiency lighting requirement on virtually every federal agency and facility. This is a practical, common sense approach that is simply the right thing to do.

I applaud Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Oberstar for their efforts to make Congress a model for the country and the world. I'd also like to thank Chairwoman Norton for working with me on this important issue and allowing me to testify today.