

The Better Use of Light Bulbs (BULB) Act

On July 11, 2011, the U.S. House of Representatives will vote on H.R. 2417, the Better Use of Light Bulbs (BULB) Act. The legislation protects Americans' access to the light bulbs of their choice and guards against mandates that force Americans to use bulbs that contain mercury.

This is a common-sense plan to reaffirm our commitment to consumer choice and competition, and it deserves strong bipartisan support. Legislation has been championed this year by Representatives Joe Barton, Michael Burgess, and Marsha Blackburn to protect consumers' access to light bulbs. Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton joined forces with these members and others to produce the new BULB Act and put it on a fast track for a vote on the House floor.

Why It Is Needed

- When it comes to American energy policy, the government should not be picking winners and losers.
- The most powerful force to drive technological advancements and a competitive market is consumer choice – not government mandates.
- Light bulb efficiency standards could carry negative unintended consequences. For example, some mandates could only be met with bulbs that contain dangerous mercury.
- Rather than having the government limit light bulb options or appear to favor one type of bulb over others, the market should allow consumers to decide on the cost, type, and efficiency of the lighting that works best for them.

How It Works

The BULB Act combines two important levels of protection for consumers.

- It eliminates efficiency standards slated to take effect in 2012 that will reduce lighting options for consumers and appear to favor certain light bulb technologies.
- It ensures no federal, state, or local lighting requirement can mandate the use of bulbs that contain mercury.

What's Next?

Members of both parties should support H.R. 2417, the Better Use of Light Bulbs (BULB) Act when it receives a vote on the House floor on July 11. New efficiency standards have not yet taken effect. If Congress acts this year, we can make sure the market – not a government mandate – gives consumers their light bulb choices.