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Environment and Transportation  
Committee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 8, 2023

To: The Honorable C.T. Wilson  
Chair, Economic Matters Committee

From: Delegate Jen Terrasa  
District 13, Howard County

Re: Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB 1021, Products That Contain  
Mercury – Fluorescent Lamps – Prohibition

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Dear Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB1021, which will help Marylanders save money and reduce exposure to dangerous mercury by prohibiting the sale or distribution of three types of fluorescent light bulbs. For many years, fluorescent lighting was preferred for certain indoor spaces, but today, LED light bulbs are the safer and more cost-effective alternative.

### **The Problem**

Fluorescent bulbs are a personal safety concern because they contain mercury. When bulbs break, mercury vapor is released to the room. Human exposure to mercury can result in nervous system, kidney and liver damage, and impaired childhood development. Plus, mercury makes disposing of fluorescent bulbs more complicated because that should only be done during hazardous waste days or at specific collection sites. The reality is that a majority of the time these bulbs are not disposed of properly. This puts public works staff at risk of exposure to mercury, as well as our waterways, as mercury leeches into landfills and trickles down to rivers and streams.

Another environmental impact of fluorescent bulbs is that they accelerate the release of carbon dioxide emissions because of how much energy they use. While fluorescent bulbs used to be the most energy efficient option for homes and businesses there are now LEDs that are twice as efficient, do not contain mercury and can be put right into the same fixture. LED light bulbs use approximately half the electricity as fluorescent bulbs to produce the same amount of light, which in turn reduces the emissions

released by power plants, helping to mitigate ongoing climate change. LEDs also last two times longer and often have better lighting quality.

While individual LED bulbs may cost slightly more than fluorescent bulbs on average, LEDs cost far less to operate. In residential settings, LED bulbs cost a dollar more than fluorescent bulbs, but that cost is canceled out in the difference in electricity bills. The bigger savings come in commercial settings. Here, LED bulbs are only 40 cents more expensive than fluorescents, but 4 dollars per bulb are saved on electricity bills.

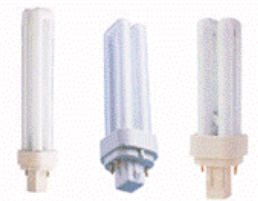
### **What the Bill Does**

HB1021 will stop the sale of screw-in or bayonet style compact fluorescent light bulbs by January 1, 2024, and by January 1, 2025 for the pin-base style. Below are the types of bulbs covered by this bill.

Screw in:



Bayonet:



Pinbase:



This legislation has a number of exemptions for bulbs needed for special uses like used copy machines, medical or scientific purposes. The bill just covers the bulbs used mostly in commercial and residential use. The compact fluorescents have largely been phased out from the markets already, but some people do have the tube fluorescents in basements or garages, and they are more commonly used in large multifamily building common spaces and business.

Maryland has already phased out the sale of other items containing mercury like thermostats and switches. Vermont and California have already passed similar bans required under this legislation and other states are considering this important change to get mercury out of our homes, businesses, and schools. We need to remove this source of mercury from our buildings and enjoy the benefits of LED lights that are more efficient and mercury free.

HB1021 will protect health, provide climate benefits, and save on energy and costs. I respectfully urge a favorable report.