



HB1021- Environment – Products That Contain Mercury - Fluorescent Lamps - Prohibition
Economic Matters
March 8, 2023
Position: Favorable

Maryland PIRG is a state based, small donor funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state. We work to find common ground around common sense solutions that will help ensure a healthier, safer, more secure future

Environment Maryland is a citizen-based environmental advocacy organization. We work to protect clean air, clean water, and open space.

This is a simple, commonsense bill to help ensure we are reducing toxic mercury exposure to protect workers, children, and our environment. Maryland has been a leader in reducing exposure to mercury and should join states that are stopping the sales of fluorescent lighting. LED lighting alternatives are readily available, far superior, and can easily be swapped in.

LED lighting is twice as efficient as fluorescent lighting and has all but taken over the home lighting marketplace. Unfortunately, some compact fluorescent light bulbs, made overseas are still on store shelves, and the market needs a push to phase out the use of fluorescent tube lights which are still used for lighting in many office buildings, basements and garages, which poses a threat to workers, families, and the environment.

The more states act, the more retailers move away, and the greater the chance that the Biden Administration will support an international phase-out of all general-purpose fluorescent lamps by 2025 at the upcoming [Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties \(COP4\) of the Minamata Convention on Mercury](#).

It's time to say farewell to fluorescent bulbs.

Fluorescent bulbs contain toxic mercury



Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that threatens human health and the environment. The World Health Organization [counts mercury](#) among the top 10 most dangerous chemicals impacting public health.

Fluorescent bulbs contain mercury and they release mercury whenever they are broken in buildings as well as during disposal.

There is no “safe” level of exposure to mercury. When a fluorescent lamp breaks, the clean-up recommendations [detailed](#) by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) include immediate evacuation, ventilating the room for several hours, shutting off central heating and cooling to avoid mercury dispersion, collecting all contaminated materials (clothing, protective gloves, rugs) in a sealed plastic container, and following their local government’s disposal recommendations.

And when fluorescent bulbs are not disposed of properly—[as happens with an estimated 75% of bulbs](#)—mercury contamination follows. Mercury in our waste stream puts sanitation workers at risk. Mercury also leaches from landfills and gets burned in incinerators and eventually contaminates rivers, lakes, and oceans and the fish and shellfish within them.

LED bulbs are more energy-efficient than fluorescent bulbs

LEDs use approximately half the electricity as fluorescent bulbs to produce the same amount of light. LEDs also last about twice as long as fluorescents, so they need to be replaced less often.



Since they cost less to operate, more than paying back their slightly higher upfront costs—which continue to drop each year—through lower electric bills. According to the report [Farewell to Fluorescents](#) released by ACEEE in 2022, a typical school could see more than \$5,000 in annual utility bill savings if all its fluorescent bulbs were replaced with LEDs.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.