

Plan to ban standard light bulbs

A Californian politician is aiming to bring in a law banning the sale of traditional light bulbs in the state.

California Assemblyman Lloyd Levine wants incandescent light bulbs banned by 2012, in favour of energy-saving fluorescent lights.

The Democrat intends to introduce his bill this week. He has already forced retailers to recycle more plastic.

'Incredibly inefficient'

"Incandescent light bulbs were first developed almost 125 years ago, and since that time they have undergone no major modifications," he said.

"Meanwhile, they remain incredibly inefficient, converting only about 5% of the energy they receive into light."

Lighting currently accounts for about a fifth of the average US home's electricity costs.

California is leading the way in the US on environmental good practice.

It was the first US state to target cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, aiming for a 25% reduction by 2020.

Bulbs must be efficient 'by 2009'

Traditional light bulbs could be taken off the shelves of UK shops within three years and replaced with energy-saving alternatives, the government has said.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has been talking to retailers and manufacturers about replacing "inefficient" goods.

Studies suggested modern bulbs lasted longer and cost less overall.

Figures from the Energy Saving Trust found energy-saving lighting products had an average lifespan of up to 12 times longer than traditional products, with modern bulbs "saving up to £9 a year on electricity bills".

'Remove inefficient products'

The European Commission would then "bring forward its proposal for a minimum standard that would prevent the sale of the least energy-efficient products within the EU".

"In the UK, we are working with retailers and manufacturers on how we could remove inefficient lighting products from UK shelves in advance of European regulations."

Energy policy has been described as "the key sector in combating climate change" by Ian Pearson, minister for climate change and the environment.

"The need to improve material and energy efficiency is becoming an increasingly important factor in environmental and economic policies," he said in a written ministerial statement on Wednesday.

And this week a report for the British government, compiled by Sir Nicholas Stern, warned that the world must act now on climate change or face devastating economic consequences.