

New Calif. Rule Creates Dim Future For Halogen, Incandescent Bulbs

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California energy regulators want to change the light bulbs commonly used in stores.

The state Energy Commission proposed new lighting standards Monday. They effectively prohibit sales of small halogen and incandescent bulbs—commonly used in track lighting—in favor of LED lights.

The bulbs cost more, but use a fraction of the energy required by other lights.

Commissioner Andrew McAllister says the switch will save Californians 3,000 gigawatt hours of energy per year.

"It's about equivalent to the energy consumed in all the households in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties combined," says McAllister.

The industry argues it doesn't need a new rule, because it's already moving toward LED.

Alex Boesenberg of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association also criticized another section of the proposed regulation.

It requires regular household LED lights to glow with the traditional yellow hue of an incandescent bulb.

"In effect, the CEC has decided for you what you like," Boesenberg says. "If you want a different color, you can't buy it legally."

If it's adopted in December, the rule would switch on in 2018.

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