

NOTICE OF MOTION**Recycling Program For Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs**

Moved by: Councillor Walker

Seconded by: Councillor Thompson

SUMMARY:

The Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) has been available since the 1980s and has recently become enormously popular as a tool to reduce energy consumption in our efforts to live more ecologically in response to Global Warming and Climate Change. Since the production of electricity is a main source of pollution of various kinds and man-made pollution has been shown conclusively to cause Global Warming, it is essential that we all reduce electricity consumption whenever and wherever we can.

When compared to the traditional incandescent bulb, a CFL uses considerably less electricity to produce the same level of light. The electricity consumption of a CFL is 20-25% that of a traditional incandescent light bulb since a CFL converts 90% of electricity into light, whereas an incandescent bulb converts only 30% into light and the rest is wasted producing superfluous heat. The lifespan of a CFL is 8-15 times that of an incandescent bulb but is 3-6 times the cost of an incandescent bulb.

However, disposing or recycling used or defective CFLs is a problem. Each CFL contains a small amount (5 mg / 25 Watt bulb) of mercury which is released in landfills and incinerators, which contributes to air and water pollution. Mercury is a neurotoxin and elevated blood levels in humans and animals result in mental impairment and reproductive abnormalities. In consequence of our rush to conserve electricity, we are becoming a catalyst to another environmental issue. Our use of Compact Fluorescent Lamps as a 'clean' fix for some of our environmental woes is not so clean after all.

Safe disposal requires storing the bulbs, unbroken, until they can be processed. Apparently, two options are available to a resident of the City of Toronto:

- a. return used CFLs to where they were purchased so they can be processed correctly (it is unclear how proper disposal is monitored in this case); or
- b. take used CFLs to a City of Toronto recycling facility.

The first step of processing involves crushing the bulbs in a machine that uses negative pressure ventilation and a mercury-absorbing filter or 'cold trap' to capture and treat the mercury gas and liquid. The crushed glass and metal is stored in drums ready for shipping to recycling factories. It is unclear if the City of Toronto has this type of specialized facility and if we do, whether the facility can handle the substantially increased volume brought on from this widespread switch to CFLs. Even though the Federal government has now banned the incandescent light bulb after 2012, the Provincial government is inconsistent with its information on proper disposal of CFLs, as well as their classification as either 'hazardous' or 'special' waste. It is definitely unclear to the residents of Toronto what they are to do with their used or defective CFLs.

One must take into account how many bulbs are being used and actualize the compounded effect upon us and our environment. It is irresponsible of the City of Toronto to recommend a product such as the Compact Fluorescent Lamp without the proper recycling facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Council direct Deputy City Manager Richard Butts to report on whether the City of Toronto has the recycling capability for Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) and traditional fluorescent and incandescent bulbs, including location of facilities, estimated diversion from landfill rate, capacity, cost and state of repair, and such report be discussed at the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee meeting of July 2007.
2. Council direct the City Manager to immediately produce and execute a public awareness campaign plan for the City of Toronto to communicate with the residents of Toronto regarding proper disposal of Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs), traditional fluorescent bulbs and incandescent bulbs.
3. Council request the Provincial government to soundly legislate the proper disposal of Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs), to make it standardized across Ontario and this request be sent, as soon as possible, by the City Clerk to the Premier of Ontario.

May 23, 2007

According to Chapter 27, Council Procedures:

Fiscal Impact Statement provided	
Should have Fiscal Impact Statement prior to debate Requires two-thirds to waive requirement if Council wishes to debate	*
Should be referred to Public Works and Infrastructure Committee Requires two-thirds vote to consider at this meeting	(√)
Motion Recommendations are Urgent	

* Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer to advise.