

Lawmakers back energy-friendly light bulbs at federal facilities

By Heather Greenfield [National Journal's Technology Daily](#) September 4, 2007

Some people may joke about the slow pace of change in Washington and that it takes an act of Congress to change a light bulb. But one House-passed spending bill actually would change the light bulbs -- throughout hundreds of government buildings.

Rep. Bob Inglis, R-S.C., authored an amendment to a fiscal 2008 appropriations bill, [H.R. 2829](#), that would prohibit the purchase of light bulbs that are not labeled energy efficient by either Energy Star or the Federal Energy Management Program. The House adopted the amendment by voice vote.

The language could have a fairly big impact, as the bill covers the Treasury Department, the judiciary, the District of Columbia, the General Services Administration, Small Business Administration, National Archives and executive office of the president, among others.

Inglis said high-efficiency bulbs like compact fluorescent light bulbs and halogen bulbs consume 75 percent less electricity than the incandescent bulbs. In March, he introduced separate legislation that would have required GSA to replace incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient ones in its 1,800 federal buildings.

Inglis estimated that those 1,800 buildings involve 3 million light bulbs and would save \$222 million over the life of the light bulbs. "This is an easy way to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel," Inglis said. "As a conservative, I'm into conserving energy."

In an interview with *Technology Daily*, Inglis said he didn't anticipate any controversy in winning Senate passage of the language. "It'll be easier over there because they'll act on our bill."

In addition to the more innovative light bulbs, the spending bill would provide \$58 million for the National Archives to develop electronic archives. The White House Office of Management and Budget had asked the archives to make sure it is preserving critical electronic information as it does other national records.

The House also voted to give slightly more than President Bush wanted to the Election Assistance Commission, which helps with grants to buy better voting machines, among other things. The House designated \$750,000 for college elections to use real e-voting machines in an effort to train the future electorate on the technology.

Another \$3.5 million would be transferred to the National Institute for Standards and Technology for technical assistance developing voluntary state voting systems guidelines.

"The funding for NIST to work on standards is definitely needed," said David Dill of Verified Voting. "A lot of our current security problems come from inadequate standards, and NIST is the agency charged with providing the technical skills to get them right for the EAC."

The House also added a minor increase -- \$5 million over what Bush requested -- for the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center. It would receive \$226 million. Congress started that program in 1998 to offer technology and training to law enforcement agencies.

Bush had proposed saving \$5 million by cutting funding for the program that transfers government-funded technology research to the private sector.

(C) 2007 BY NATIONAL JOURNAL GROUP, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.