

ENERGY SAVING LAMPS AND THE BAN OF INCANDESCENT LAMPS

An Open Letter from the Institute of Building Biology + Ecology Neubeuern (IBN) to the Responsible Politicians in the European Union

To the Chancellor of Germany: Ms. Angela Merkel

To the German Minister of Environment: Mr. Siegmund Gabriel

To the European Environment Agency: Ms. Jacqueline McGlade

We, hereby, ask you to use all means at your disposal to overthrow the Europe-wide ban of incandescent lamps.

For the past 30 years, the IBN has been researching a wide variety of ecological and biological aspects. The Institute has also trained building biology environmental consultants, testing specialists, and energy efficiency advisors. Among others, environmental protection and energy efficiency are of prime concern to us.

The only advantage energy saving lamps have over incandescent lamps is their low energy consumption, which for most products is an economic and ecological consideration. This advantage, however, is bought at the price of a number of disadvantages that have not yet been pointed out—or only partly so—by the representatives of industry, trade associations, media, and consumer protection organizations.

Characteristics of energy saving lamps not found in incandescent lamps include:

- ★ Electromagnetic pollution emissions across several frequency bands, umpteen times higher than allowed for computer monitors, with steep harmonics, interference, peaks, pulses, distorted sine waves
- ★ Light flickering across several frequency bands, also rich in harmonics, peaks, spurious signals, distorted sine waves, “dirty” light
- ★ Poorer quality of the light spectrum with only two to four narrowband colors, spectral power distribution strongly deviates from natural daylight, high percentage of blue and UV light
- ★ Emission of toxins and odors
- ★ Brightness often lower than specified, may become even much lower over time
- ★ Lifespan often shorter than specified, especially after numerous switching cycles, in tests, energy saving bulbs would sometimes blow out before the incandescent ones
- ★ Elaborate manufacturing process including components that are a health risk: various heavy metals, plastics, adhesives, phosphorescent coatings, electronics, capacitor, printed circuit boards, ballast (radioactive components until 2007), average mercury content 2-4 mg (some 100 kilograms in Germany alone)
- ★ Toxic waste disposal (most end up in household garbage anyhow)
- ★ Energy efficiency in most energy saving lamps lower than specified
- ★ Above-mentioned electromagnetic pollution emissions not only occur at lamp, but also spread across the electrical installation incl. its cables, wires, appliances...
- ★ The same applies to spurious signals and fault currents that may cause technical problems in sensitive electronic installations, devices, and data transmissions...
- ★ Poor compatibility with modern home automation systems (interference, flickering)
- ★ Ultrasound emissions

★ Life cycle assessment questionable

In addition, energy saving lamps are a health risk because of their mercury content. When an incandescent lamp breaks, a broom and scoop is all you need to sweep it up and the problem is solved. But if an energy saving lamp breaks, you will have a toxic waste problem right in your own home.

Please find a comprehensive list of arguments and quotes attached.

In the interest of a holistic climate protection as well as the protection of citizens from unnecessary electromagnetic pollution and environmental toxins, we ask you to deal with this issue.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Anton Schneider

Institut für Baubiologie + Oekologie (IBN)
Institute of Building Biology + Ecology (IBN)
Independent private GmbH Holzham 25 D-83115 Neubeuern

For more information see also

<http://www.baubiologie.de/downloads/manuskripte/Gluehbirne-Energiesparlampen-2009>

<http://www.baubiologie.de/downloads/manuskripte/Energiesparlampen-Zitate-2009.pdf>