

Biden flips the switch on Trump's incandescent light bulb plan

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(CNN) In yet another rollback of a Trump-era policy, President Joe Biden's Department of Energy on Tuesday finalized a new efficiency rule to phase out older, high-energy incandescent light bulbs.

The new rule states that light bulbs must emit a minimum of 45 lumens per watt. Lumens are a measure of brightness. The rule is an effective nail in the coffin for incandescent bulbs, which use a higher wattage than LED bulbs for the same amount of brightness.

Old bulbs that don't meet the new standard will need to be phased out of production within 75 days, and the Department of Energy will work with manufacturers to ease the transition. Full enforcement of the rule will go into effect in July 2023, which is also the deadline for retailers to stop selling them.

The move is the culmination of a decades-long, bipartisan effort to phase out inefficient light bulbs. Energy efficiency standards were included in an energy bill passed under the George W. Bush administration and implemented during the Obama administration. But the Trump administration rolled those regulations back in 2019.

The new rules put enforcement teeth into a transition that's been happening for years with the rise of energy efficient LED bulbs. The efficiency of LEDs mean they last much longer than incandescent bulbs: LED's typically last 30,000 to 50,000 hours or longer, while incandescent bulbs last around 1,000 hours, [according to DOE data](#).

The Energy Department estimates the rules will save US consumers close to \$3 billion on their utility bills, and project it will also cut planet-warming carbon emissions by 222 million metric tons over the next 30 years.

"By raising energy efficiency standards for light bulbs, we're putting \$3 billion back in the pockets of American consumers every year and substantially reducing domestic carbon emissions," Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said in a statement. "The lighting industry is already embracing more energy efficient products, and this measure will accelerate progress to deliver the best products to American consumers and build a better and brighter future."

Even with the Trump administration's delay, LED use has been increasing in US households. Nearly half of US households said they used LED bulbs for most or all their indoor lighting, according to the 2020 Residential Energy Consumption Survey. It was a huge increase from the 2015 survey, where just 4% of households reported using LED's for most or all indoor light use.

"We are long overdue to phase out inefficient old-fashioned light bulbs as this progress was illegally delayed by the Trump administration for more than two years," Joe Vukovich, an energy efficiency advocate for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in a statement. "LED bulbs, which will replace the old incandescents, use one-sixth the amount of energy to deliver the same amount of light and last at least 10 times longer."