

Lawmakers move to secure more life for 100-watt bulb

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The House of Representatives gave extended life to the 100-watt bulb Friday, voting to delay a ban on sales of the incandescent bulb for nine months, from Jan. 1 to the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30, 2012.

The House vote, which was part of a funding bill for water and energy programs in the 2012 fiscal year, effectively de-funds implementation of

the phase-out of the [incandescent bulb](#), which was part of an energy-efficiency provision of the energy law that President George W. Bush signed in 2007.

House Republicans, led by Texans Michael Burgess and Joe Barton, have been on a tear to undo the bulb provision, and though a Barton-led effort failed earlier in the week, Burgess' success opens the door for more.

[Environmentalists](#) and Democratic supporters, as well as some Republicans, are upset that gains in efficiency are at risk.

During the House debate, Burgess warned that "starting January 1, if Home Depot or your local grocery store has the 100-watt bulb in their inventory, they will not be allowed to sell them. That means they will take all 100-watt bulbs off the shelf, and they will never see the consumer. My amendment will allow the stores to continue to sell what they have in stock. The 2007 provision never said that these companies could not make the bulb; it said that they couldn't be sold."

"Further," Burgess said, "if a manufacturer should choose to continue to make 100-watt bulbs, they would be permitted under this language, as there is clearly a market based on the thousands of consumers who have contacted Congress upset about their inability to buy 100-watt [light bulbs](#). This is about the consumer driving the market, not the federal government deciding the market."

Barton, who has been one of the most visible opponents of the bulb requirement, said of the House vote: "It is the first step in restoring [consumer choice](#) and ending government intrusion into our homes."

Barton's effort to repeal the light bulb standard - which calls for efficient bulbs by 2014 - failed in the House earlier this week on a vote that required a two-thirds majority, but he has vowed to bring it up again.

But David Goldston, the director of government affairs for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said that Burgess and Barton had it all wrong.

"It's a step backward," Goldston said. "Companies that make the bulbs are all geared up to meet the standard and consumers would save \$100 a year per household. It will mean potentially we have to build more power plants. It's a loss for consumers, it's a loss for health and it's a loss for the economy."

Goldston is hopeful the Senate won't go along with the House because, he said, "there is much more support for a light bulb standard in the Senate."

Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass., a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, ridiculed House Republicans for the vote. "Now that Republicans are finished battling energy-efficient light bulbs, maybe they will focus that energy on finding a light at the end of the tunnel with the debt limit negotiations," he said.

David Jenkins, the vice president for government and political affairs for Republicans for Environmental Protection, warned that postponing the efficiency measure would hurt companies.

"If enacted into law, this ... would strand millions of dollars that lighting manufacturers have invested to produce more efficient incandescent light bulbs, cause confusion in the market and waste consumers' money," he said.

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