

Calif. EPA to divert millions of fluorescent bulbs

Nov. 27 -- The California Environmental Protection Agency has agreed to divert millions of mercury containing fluorescent bulbs from landfills in collaboration with the U.S. EPA under the National Partnership for Environmental Priorities program.

Cal/EPA is the first state agency to join the NPEP program. The state aims to divert 4.5 million compact fluorescent light bulbs from landfills in only one year. CFLs, which reduce energy usage, contain small amounts of mercury.

NPEP, a voluntary program, seeks to reduce the use or release of 4 million pounds of toxic chemicals in the United States by 2011. The EPA launched the NPEP Mercury Challenge in 2004 to focus on the elimination of mercury from the waste stream.

Cal/EPA has committed to reducing mercury through its Take-it-Back partnership, a collaboration of government, private business and nonprofit organizations that provides free, local and convenient ways for residents to recycle household wastes such as batteries, fluorescent lamps and cell phones.

Additional information about the NPEP program is available online at www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/minimize/npep/index.htm.