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Lights out just fine: poll

Voters support move to ban incandescent bulbs by 2012

By James Wallace, Osprey News Network

Local News - Wednesday, May 30, 2007 Updated @ 3:44:59 PM

Government plans to ban incandescent light bulbs by 2012 are getting a green light from Ontario voters.

An overwhelming majority support decisions to phase out light bulbs currently used in almost every household in the country, shows an SES Research/Osprey Media poll.

"There's very strong support, almost eight out of every ten Ontarians support the ban on incandescent light bulbs," said SES president Nik Nanos.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, whose State has also announced plans to ban florescent bulbs by 2012, drew national attention yesterday with his visit to Ontario to sign a pact with the province to "fight" greenhouse gases.

Both jurisdictions agreed to promote green technology, develop a low carbon fuel standard for gas and work together on climate change policies ranging from a North American emissions trading system to more energy efficient buildings.

Schwarzenegger, speaking at Queen's Park, said he and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty are "soulmates" on this issue and expressed hope other provinces and U. S. States will join the accord.

"This bigger this partnership is the more successful it will be," Schwarzenegger said.

Ontario's Liberal government and the federal Conservative government in Ottawa have both announced plans to phase out the use of incandescent lights as part of broader efforts to reduce greenhouse gases.

Compact florescent light bulbs use two-thirds less energy than incandescent bulbs, last up to ten times longer and reduce energy consumption.

The province estimates replacing all 87 million incandescent bulbs in Ontario households with compact florescent bulbs would save six million megawatt hours annually — enough to power 600,000 homes.

Nationally, the ban is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than six million tonnes a year and save homeowners about \$60 annually in electricity costs.

Not everyone, however, is eager to embrace the new technology, the poll found.



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While 59 per cent of Ontarians strongly support and 19 per cent somewhat support greener bulbs, older Ontarians were the most likely to oppose change, the poll found.

"What I kind of find interesting is there's a bit of a generational split," Nanos said.

"If you look at Ontarians who are over 50 years of age, although there's still a minority opinion, they're the most likely to resist or oppose the ban," he said.

"When we get to Ontarians who are 60 years of age, three out of ten or 30 per cent are oppose the ban."

Women at 80 per cent were also slightly more likely than men at 75 per cent to support banning older bulbs.

Global warming and measures intended to combat climate change have emerged as hot button political issues in the past couple of years.

The plan to outlaw incandescent bulbs likely has appeal because its easy for consumers to understand, Nanos said.

"It's a targeted, manageable initiative that can make people feel like they're making a difference," he said.

"Usually the slippery slope on a lot of these environmental issues is the potential impact on the economy, the perception jobs could be lost or there could be disruptions to the economy," Nanos said.

"But when they see something like this, which is very narrowly focused, it's hard really to argue with it."

The SES telephone survey of 500 Ontario voting-age adults was conducted between May 11 and May 15. It is considered accurate within 4.4 per cent, 19 times out of 20. Details of the poll are available at www.sesresearch.com.

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