

The death and rebirth of the incandescent bulb

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Factories that produce traditional incandescent bulbs are closing in anticipation of the new legislation from Congress that effectively phases out incandescent bulbs beginning in 2012. To Congress, the facts are as clear as day: incandescent bulbs are inefficient, giving off too much heat for the amount of light produced. Compact fluorescent bulbs are now the preferred light bulb.

It is, nonetheless, sad to see GE closing factories that produced a product that changed everyone's lives. The GE factories in [Kentucky](#) and [Canada](#) produced light bulbs and light bulb parts for over 50 years. Those factories will be shuttered and the workers let go.

But, as any woman who has ever stood in a dressing room trying on swimsuits will tell you, fluorescent lights (compact or otherwise) are not your friend. That cool harsh fluorescent light would make even Gisele Bündchen look-----well maybe Gisele is not a good choice here. But, you get the idea.

There may be some good news for those who love the soft yellow glow of an old fashioned light bulb. Philips [has developed](#) and is selling incandescent bulbs that meet the 2012 standard. And, more innovations in incandescent bulbs are on the way.

Although the new Philips bulbs are \$5 or more per bulb and only available at Home Depot and on Amazon, the company says that the 70-watt Halogena Energy Saver gives off the same amount of light as a traditional 100-watt bulb and last 3 times longer.

Although, these new incandescents cannot yet match the efficiency of the compact fluorescents which use 75% less energy than old-style incandescents. On the plus side, however, they do not have the harsh color, slow start-up time, or mercury of fluorescents.

Philips was able to achieve greater incandescent efficiency by using reflective coatings developed by [Deposition Sciences](#) in Santa Rosa, CA. Along with Philips, Osram Sylvania, Auer Lighting, Toshiba and, yes, GE, are all researching the use of reflective coatings.

For decades nothing much has changed for Thomas Edison's light bulb. Now this federal legislation is spurring these innovations.



Will incandescent light bulbs cost more in the future? Yes, they will cost significantly more but Phillips argues that the higher cost will be offset by the higher efficiency and longer life. And hopefully, with all these players racing toward the 2012 deadline, more innovations will lead to lower costs, more choices and a softer light.