

New ideas in lighting get closer to market

By Diane Cardwellmay, New York Times

WOBURN, Mass. – Ever since government regulations began phasing out the traditional light bulb in 2012, the once-simple visit to the lighting aisle has become an exercise in navigating a dizzying array of choices and terminologies, especially for new kinds of compact fluorescents and LEDs.

Now, those choices are about to become even more complicated. Two start-up companies are poised to begin selling bulbs that use entirely different technologies – one borrowed from heavy industry and the other from old-fashioned televisions – but meet the new energy standards.

Whether they can capture customers who remain stubbornly wedded to incandescent light is anybody's guess. But that both have come this far is an indication of how unsettled the consumer lighting market remains, despite years of promotion for the new energy-saving options.

“It's going to be a really long putt to try to replace the incandescent,” said Mark Rea, director of the Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. “People hate change of any kind. We make light sources today that are better than incandescent by any metric at delivering the benefits you're expecting from lighting. But it's different.”

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