

GILES CHICHESTER MEP

for South West England and Gibraltar

PRESS LETTER

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To the Editor, Letters

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Dear Editor

It is often difficult for me to control my anger at the irresponsible way in which this Government has rushed into adopting so-called eco-friendly legislation to prove their green credentials. They pay little regard to expert advice or the views of the British people and, in consequence, have made a dog's breakfast of Government policies to reduce carbon emissions and develop a green, sustainable energy supply.

Their latest debacle involves the implementation of the EU Directive to ban incandescent light bulbs by 2012 and replace them with energy efficient fluorescent bulbs. When this legislation was introduced, the European Parliament made clear that the implementation date for the ban was a matter for the British Government. Technological problems and reasons for concern about the medical effects of fluorescent light on conditions such as migraine, autism and epilepsy should have required full investigation. However, despite these potential problems and the effects of the ban on our recessionary economy, the Government chose to introduce the legislation two years before the required deadline.

In their haste to introduce the incandescent light bulb ban, the Government, however, appears not to have read the details of its own legislation. Although it is clear that the ban only applies to the manufacture and import of incandescent bulbs, Defra is instructing Trading Standards to prosecute any shopkeeper who sells the light bulbs after the September ban deadline. Yet the legislation the Government has introduced permits shopkeepers to sell incandescent bulbs until their stocks run out. What an embarrassing mess.

There is ample evidence to show the benefits of energy saving fluorescent bulbs but surely we do not need to be forced by ill-thought legislation to use them. If the benefits are so obvious then people will use them. Equally if these light bulbs cause problems then they will be rejected. Government should provide people with information and then trust them to make the right decision about the type of bulb that is appropriate for them. We are all well aware of the issues of climate change and do not require the imposition of restrictive nanny state rules to be responsible citizens.



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