

**Testimony to the House Energy & Environment Committee
on House Bill 2531**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Good afternoon, Chair Marsh and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Jamie Pang and I am the Environmental Health Program Director for Oregon Environmental Council. I am here today in support of HB 2531 that would reduce a serious environmental threat: the presence of mercury in our environment.

For many years, most of us replaced inefficient incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent ones. This made sense because fluorescent bulbs were more efficient.

However, all fluorescent bulbs contain mercury, a potent neurotoxin that threatens human health and the environment. The World Health Organization counts mercury among the top 10 most dangerous chemicals impacting public health.

When fluorescent bulbs are accidentally broken—whether in homes, businesses, or the waste management system—they present a health hazard to those nearby. And when they are not disposed of properly—as happens with an estimated 75% of bulbs—mercury leaches from landfills and eventually contaminates rivers, lakes, and oceans and the fish and shellfish within them. This has been a trade-off we've had to make for years – environmental risk from mercury -- for significant energy savings. But this trade-off is no longer needed.

LEDs, are mercury-free and a much safer option. Technology advancements in recent years have made them readily available and cost effective. By transitioning to LED lighting, Oregon could eliminate 171 pounds of mercury waste in 8.5 billion gallons of water.

Let's join Vermont and California in phasing out mercury-containing fluorescent lights and make the full transition to LEDs.

Thank you.

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