



**STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

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**GOVERNOR'S DIRECTIVE No. 04-01**

**TO:** Statewide Elected Officials  
State Agency Directors  
Presidents of Higher Education Institutions  
State Boards and Commissions

**FROM:** Gary Locke, Governor

**DATE:** January 28, 2004

**SUBJECT:** Recycling Fluorescent Bulbs

In order to reduce the significant threat to health and safety posed by mercury pollution in our state, I am directing state agencies and institutions to recycle all fluorescent lamps and bulbs at the end of their useful life. Disposal to landfills risks the release of mercury to the environment. Lamp recycling is an opportunity for state government to reduce exposure to toxic substances, which persist in the environment and can build up in human tissues.

Mercury is toxic to people and wildlife and is a problem in Washington State. At least 30 of our lakes, rivers and bays fail environmental standards due to mercury in water, fish or bottom sediments. Additionally, fish consumption advisories have been issued for several locations in the state. Human-caused sources of mercury include mining, petroleum combustion, coal-powered plants, sewage treatment plants and the landfilling and incineration of a variety of consumer products. Consumer products containing mercury include switches, thermometers, thermostats, and fluorescent lamps. Mercury is released into the air when these products are broken, incinerated or landfilled.

Estimates suggest that 75 percent of spent fluorescent lamps are currently landfilled, adding unnecessarily to the mercury load in our environment.

Contract No. 11601 with the Department of General Administration provides for lamp recycling with a certified recycler who will separate and purify the mercury for reuse, at a relatively minimal cost. It also includes cost effective options for state agencies located in more remote locations. For more information contact Department of General Administration staff at (360) 902-7400.

This action will help implement:

1. The legislatively funded Mercury Action Plan, developed jointly by the Departments of Health and Ecology, and
2. Executive Order 02-03, Sustainable Practices by State Agencies.

Thank you for your efforts to prevent a source of toxic pollution in our state and to improve the quality of our environment.