



Take Back the Light Launches in Ontario

Ontario Government Supports Recycling Council's Innovative Fluorescent Lamp Recycling Program
www.takebackthelight.ca

TORONTO, June 18, 2008 – Today, the Recycling Council of Ontario, joined by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, unveiled *Take Back the Light* – Canada's first and only comprehensive fluorescent lamp recycling program for the industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) sector. The program aims to recover and recycle the 30 million fluorescent lamps disposed of yearly across the province – which is ten times more than today's efforts. In doing so, almost 312 kilograms of potentially toxic mercury will be properly collected and recycled.

Funded by the Ministry of the Environment and led by the Recycling Council of Ontario, *Take Back the Light* works with both the suppliers and users of mercury-containing lamps to break down the barriers that have historically deterred lamp recycling in Ontario.

"*Take Back the Light* empowers organizations to recycle their lamps by simplifying the process and using sheer bulk buying power to get the best possible price for lamp recycling," says Jo-Anne St. Godard, Executive Director of the Recycling Council of Ontario. "Participating in the program makes both environmental and economic sense, especially when the current reality is that only seven per cent of fluorescent lamps are recycled in this province."

The mercury contained in the 30 million lamps disposed of yearly in Ontario is enough to contaminate a body of water larger than Lake Erie to the point where its fish would be unfit for consumption. *Take Back the Light* ensures that the mercury found in the bulbs is properly contained and reused so that it does not reach landfills and contaminate the air, water and soil. While the recovery of mercury is the primary objective of the program, over eight million kilograms of glass, 100,000 kilograms of metal, and 128,000 kilograms of phosphor will also be reclaimed and available for re-use.

"This program is good news for our environmental future," said Environment Minister John Gerretsen. "It's the kind of project we need in Ontario: one that sees the public and private sectors working together to create a healthier future; one that considers the benefits of addressing end-of-life solutions for common products. I'm pleased to have provided funding for this program, and I'm pleased we're the first participant."

Take Back the Light is the ideal solution for businesses and institutions currently using fluorescent lamps, as it provides a cost-effective and streamlined approach to handling spent fluorescent bulbs and other lighting waste. Participation is easy. Organizations are invited to register online at www.takebackthelight.ca. A program administrator will contact the registrant within 24 hours to provide information about the recycling process and lamp storage and transportation procedures.

The Ontario Government is committed to the *Take Back the Light* program and is currently implementing facility management operations in all PIR-owned buildings that will divert 100% of fluorescent bulbs from landfills immediately. Over the next four years, government-owned and -operated facilities will be phased in to the program.

"There are many things businesses and organizations can do to reduce their eco-footprint," said Minister David Caplan, Ontario Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. "The Government of Ontario will be increasing its



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recycling efforts exponentially and is committed to including provincially owned buildings in the *Take Back the Light* program.”

Take Back the Light is made possible through seed funding provided by the Government of Ontario. The program’s goal is to responsibly recycle 10 million lamps disposed of by the industrial, commercial and institutional sector by 2012. For more information please visit www.takebackthelight.ca.

About Recycling Council of Ontario:

The Recycling Council of Ontario (RCO) is a not-for-profit, membership-based organization committed to minimizing society's impact on the environment by eliminating waste. RCO's mission is to inform and educate all members of society about the avoidance of waste, efficient use of resources, and the benefits and/or consequences of these activities. Since its inception in 1978, RCO has actively assisted municipalities, corporations, other organizations and individuals in reducing waste.

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