

Oregon hospitals recycle bulbs

Pricing barriers were dissuading many Oregon hospitals from recycling their fluorescent bulbs. To turn things around, the Oregon Health Care Without Harm Campaign, Oregon Center for Environmental Health and Oregon State Department of Environmental Quality worked together to negotiate a discounted rate with a local bulb recycling vendor. In the first year, the 16 participants successfully diverted 67,000 lamps.

The cost to recycle the lamps represents just 1-2 percent of the lifetime cost of the bulbs, which includes purchase price plus energy costs. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality estimates that only 20 percent of lamps in the state are recycled, making fluorescent light bulbs one of the largest sources of mercury in Oregon's waste stream. Efforts continue to improve rates of recycling.

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