

## **CFL Recycling Project**

### **Meeting Three Summary**

The last of three meetings was held February 27, 2002. It is important to point out that there were many stakeholders in the Group seeking various, and perhaps different, desired outcomes of the project. The multi-stakeholder process aimed to enable the Group to reach agreeable outcomes through consensus. The group as a whole benefits in different ways. Keeping this in mind when trying to define the “purpose” of the project was important.

The issue of getting the biggest bang for the buck arose in the meetings. It was recognized that CFLs are not the largest source of mercury in the environment. However, the CFL Recycling Project was initiated to specifically address the end of life issues stemming from promotion and sale of over 8.5 million CFLs during the 2001 energy crisis. The \$0.35-0.75 cost per CFL recycled seemed high compared to the low economic value of the small amount of mercury and other materials recovered. The key desire was to avoid mercury reaching the environment due to its bio-accumulative persistent and toxic properties. When one considered the overall savings from the use of CFLs compared the recycling costs, the cost/benefit ratio was still highly favorable.

The data gathered in a pilot project would provide invaluable information with regards to how to encourage CFL users to buy/recycle lamps within a regional program. It was also deemed important to test the collection method in different size retailer stores in different geographic locations to determine how a potential regional program may be implemented.

### Length of the Pilot

The Group determined that a collection period for a pilot project of 12 months (or potentially longer) would be most appropriate for gathering data necessary in implementing a regional program. Approximately four months preparation and advertising would be needed on the front end and an additional two months evaluation and reporting period would be necessary after the collection period; thus the pilot would likely span an 18-month project period. The pilot period needs to be long enough to allow for sufficient data to be collected that can provide useful information about the effectiveness of advertising and promotions. This data can be used in setting up a regional program. 12 months also allows for collection during each season.

### Advertising

Several options exist for advertising and depend on the geographic location of the pilots. Periodic utility bill stuffers and updates would be useful in targeting specific zip codes, as would be direct mail and local/neighborhood newspapers. Radio, TV, and newspapers would be more useful in saturating areas and could be used in cities with distinct boundaries like Bend, whereas a more targeted campaign would be required for a location like Hillsboro which is part of a larger metropolitan area. It was agreed that cooperative advertising/marketing would be used to reach CFL users.

### Costs

Pilot project location scenarios with costs estimates were presented to serve only as a platform for the Group in starting discussions concerning specific budget line items. Up-front costs estimates for the pilot were deemed high, with the main cost being allocated to project management activities. Costs would vary depending on geographical areas, how many retailer sites participated, store locations, recovery rates, recycling costs, and breadth of advertising and promotion. The greater numbers of CFLs are in heavily populated areas. As a result, recycling costs in these areas would be higher.

Several participants have offered to provide in-kind contributions during the pilot, including reduced cost or free transportation/recycling, promotion design, recycling hotline for customers, and advertising assistance. The details have not yet been worked out but these contributions are helping to move the pilot project forward. Cooperative advertising/marketing strategies would be employed in the pilot to encourage sharing of costs.

### Locations

The Group examined the pilot location scenarios and determined that it would recommend testing a pilot in several geographic locations and at both large and small retailer sites. This would allow several advertising methods to be tested to see what works for a particular area. Testing several locations, types of stores, and varying advertising would provide better quality of data than having a pilot at only one location in one type of retailer site.

### Expanding the project to include tubes

Several additional considerations for expanding the project to include tubes were presented. The Group reconfirmed their interest in allowing retailer sites to determine whether or not to accept tubes for recycling. It was agreed however, that only CFLs recycling would be promoted in advertising campaigns. Limited space is perhaps the main reason stores may be prevented from offering to collect tubes. Customers often bring in tubes regardless when replacing burned out fixtures. Only tubes from residents would be accepted, as there are other programs for recycling tubes from commercial sources. The cost of recycling these additional tubes is expected to be much less than that of the CFLs.

### Coupons

The Group agreed that coupons would be an attractive part of the pilot project, though it was pointed out that coupons would affect project costs and may be seen as a hassle by participating retailers. It was mentioned that coupons might also be used not only to recycle lamps, but also promote the purchase of a new CFL. There have been no offers yet to cover the cost of the coupons.

### Funding

The Group agreed that the project would benefit by one organization taking a leadership role. It was expressed that the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) might be most appropriate due to their receiving funding from utilities that are interested in testing a pilot project and potentially establishing a permanent regional program. Also, in the meeting it was recognized that currently, NEEA is in contact with some 90 utilities and 1,700 retailers in support of regional programs that make energy efficient products, such as CFLs, available in the marketplace. While a few in the Group expressed that CFL recycling may be outside of NEEA's mission, many felt that CFL recycling is in line with NEEA's work in transforming markets because recycling demonstrates responsible end-of-life management of the products they are promoting; and thus represents an appropriate example of 'closing the loop'.

However, NEEA was not represented at the meeting and it is not known whether NEEA would adopt such a program. Further discussion with NEEA will be sought to determine if and how the CFL recycling project can contribute to NEEA's mission and work. The Group also explored other sources of funding for the pilot, including working with government and through grant opportunities. The Group expressed a desire for all interested parties to work together and contribute in exploring funding options.

### Transition Period

During the meeting, the Group agreed that a transition period is needed to maintain the momentum of Phase II until development of the pilot project is completed and Phase III is scheduled to begin. The ZWA, having facilitated the project thus far, was nominated to perform the work during this transition period. ZWA expressed willingness in continuing through the transition period.