

RCW 70A.505.010 Findings—Purpose. (Effective until January 1, 2035.) The legislature finds that:

(1) Mercury is an essential component of many energy efficient lights. Improper disposal methods will lead to mercury releases that threaten the environment and harm human health. Spent mercury lighting is a hard to collect waste product that is appropriate for product stewardship;

(2) Convenient and environmentally sound product stewardship programs for mercury-containing lights that include collecting, transporting, and recycling mercury-containing lights will help protect Washington's environment and the health of state residents;

(3) (a) The purpose of this chapter is to achieve a statewide goal of recycling all end-of-life mercury-containing lights through expanded public education, a uniform statewide requirement to recycle all mercury-containing lights, and the development of a comprehensive, safe, and convenient collection system that includes use of residential curbside collection programs, mail-back containers, increased support for household hazardous waste facilities, and a network of additional collection locations;

(b) The purpose of chapter 339, Laws of 2024 is to reduce exposure to mercury by prohibiting the sale of most mercury-containing lights beginning in 2029 and to provide continuing collection of mercury-containing lights that have already entered the marketplace;

(4) Product producers must play a significant role in financing no-cost collection and processing programs for mercury-containing lights; and

(5) Providers of premium collection services such as residential curbside and mail-back programs may charge a fee to cover the collection costs for these more convenient forms of collection. [2024 c 339 s 3; 2010 c 130 s 1. Formerly RCW 70.275.010.]

Finding—Intent—2024 c 339: "(1) The legislature finds that in 2025 the state's stewardship program for the end-of-life management of mercury-containing lights is statutorily scheduled to undergo review and termination or possible extension under chapter 43.131 RCW, the sunset act. If the mercury-containing lights product stewardship program were allowed to sunset as scheduled, Washington residents would lose a consistent, convenient, and safe way to return unwanted mercury-containing lights, which will remain in use for years as existing inventory winds down, even as the lighting industry has moved away from most mercury-containing lights. Mercury-containing lights present such a significant health risk that other states have recently restricted their sale, which represents a solution to reduce the public health impacts of new lighting products, but does not address the end-of-life management issues associated with the existing light bulbs currently in use.

(2) The state's existing mercury-containing lights program, which was first enacted over a decade ago, contains policy provisions, including the establishment of a per-bulb fee attached to the sale of mercury-containing lights, that are now recognized as not representing the best practices for the design of stewardship programs.

(3) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to:

(a) Restrict the sale of most mercury-containing lights;

(b) Extend the implementation of the stewardship program for mercury-containing lights; and

(c) Modernize key elements of the state's mercury-containing lights stewardship program." [2024 c 339 s 1.]