Donald Trump’s reversal of light bulbs standards

What is the issue?

- The US government issued a new rule reversing a requirement for everyday light bulbs to be energy-efficient by 2020.
- The rollback of the rule was welcomed by the US energy industry but criticized by environment groups.

What does reversal of this rule mean?

- This new rule proposed by Trump’s administration closely follows on the heels of other recent anti-environment steps.
- This means that light bulbs that were scheduled to be phased out by January 2020 will continue to be manufactured and sold in the US, costing billions of dollars in energy bills.
- The National Electrical Manufacturers Association and lighting companies that stand to financially benefit from this rule welcomed the announcement by the US government.
- Environmental advocacy groups such as the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) protested.
- The rollback will lead to more pollution harming the environment due to all the extra electricity that will need to be generated.

Whom does this new rule benefit?

- These steps may be aimed at protecting the interests of US light bulb manufacturers and not any concern for the environment.
- NPR reported that US companies that manufacture light bulbs have opposed steps taken to expand the use of higher standards of energy efficiency.
- Every time a consumer shifts to an LED, that light bulb is going to last 10 years or longer.
- So the light bulb manufacturers are trying to save technology that keeps the consumer coming back to buy another bulb every year, but still wastes a lot of energy.

Why are environmental groups opposing this?

- They are opposing this rollback as it will lead to higher energy bills for homes and commercial establishments and the extra energy that these bulbs

will require will cause more pollution.

- LED bulbs are more energy-efficient and there was a legislation to phase out inefficient incandescent and halogen light bulbs by 2020.
- The NRDC's statement implied that US light bulb manufacturers had opposed this legislation.
- This is because they made more money on incandescent bulbs that burn out every year or two than from the longer-lasting, energy efficient bulbs.
- In the US, many people continue to buy incandescent bulbs and halogens because of the lower costs of these type of bulbs, despite LED bulbs lasting longer.
- Energy efficiency standards would mean that all light bulbs produced would be energy efficient.

Are environmental & climate change relevant in the ongoing US presidential campaign?

- Climate change has been a recurring issue in discussions surrounding candidates who are vying for the office of President of the U.S.
- All candidates emphasized the importance of dealing with climate change but stopped short of providing solutions on how to actively address the issue.
- According to polling results released by Yale University, climate change comes a close second after health care in priorities for the American voter.
- According to The Guardian, among all voting Americans, nearly 7 in 10 are worried about climate change, the highest ever recorded level of concern.
- There are strong bipartisan majorities in favour of setting pollution limits on industry, businesses, cars and trucks".

Source: The Indian Express

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