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Dim Bulbs At The Department Of Energy

Posted 06:37 PM ET

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Energy: As gas prices hit \$3.79 (and \$4.20 in California), Energy Secretary Steven Chu admits he doesn't own a car. Seems he doesn't own any lights either, since he just gave a \$10 million "affordability prize" for a \$50 bulb.

Chu says the prize — awarded to Philips for its new LED bulb — was meant to spur development of advanced, superefficient light bulbs that are "affordable for American families."

But at \$50 a pop, even the one-percenters will find it hard to afford lighting their mansions.

And maybe Chu hasn't shopped at Home Depot lately, but there's already a bulb on the market that's highly affordable. It's the thing Thomas Edison invented a while back, and it costs just 37 cents.

Of course, the green bulb crowd explains that LEDs — along with the garish neon bulbs — cut electricity use, which is why they're forcing Americans to buy them. Just make sure you don't drop one.

To make matters even more ridiculous, Chu actually managed to find the most expensive LED on the market for his affordability prize. Two others brands sell for almost half the price of Philips'. As Home Depot's Brad Paulsen told the Washington Post, "This is a Cadillac product."

But ineptitude is par for the course at Chu's Energy Department. This is the same crowd, after all, that handed out \$535 million in loans to Solyndra, only to have the company squander the money and go bankrupt.

They're the same geniuses who gave Fisker Automotive \$529 million in loan guarantees to create domestic jobs building its luxury electric car, only to have the company site the plant in Finland.

These are the ones who showered praise and taxpayer money on the plug-in Volt, only to have Chevy suspend production because so few people actually wanted to own the thing.



And it's headed by a guy who yearns for European-level gas prices so Americans will give up their energy-hogging ways, only to find his wife driving a gas-guzzling BMW.

But what does Chu himself care about high gas prices? As he told a House subcommittee this week, "I don't own a car at the moment."

Tell us again why we need a Department of Energy?

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