



**The Maryland Department of the Environment  
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***House Bill 305  
Outdoor Lighting - Standards and Use of State Funds***

**Position:** Oppose

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Date:** February 14, 2024

**From:** Gabrielle Leach

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **OPPOSES** HB 305.

**Bill Summary**

House Bill 305 adds § 12-301 to Title 12, Subtitle 13 of the Public Safety Article requiring MDE to develop outdoor lighting standards (“Standards”) on or before October 1, 2025. In establishing the Standards, MDE must consider certain factors, including energy consumption, the environment, public health, and public safety. MDE would be required to consult with the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), and the State Highway Administration. MDE may also consult with lighting industry experts, community and advocacy organizations, and any other interested stakeholders.

**Position Rationale**

While MDE agrees that energy conservation can have public health and environmental benefits, MDE does not currently have staff expertise in this area. In order to set these standards, MDE would need to obtain contractual assistance to study this further and develop outdoor lighting standards. There are a lot of unknown variables that would need to be considered, including but not limited to, statewide distribution of leased vs. owned systems, existing maintenance needs across local jurisdictions, implementable enforcement strategies for outdoor lighting standards, identifying and managing the existing funding sources for outdoor lighting, and the potential for operational cost savings that would impact either the State or a local government.

For the reasons detailed above, MDE urges a **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 305.