



## HB305

### Outdoor Lighting - Standards and Use of State Funds Testimony before Environment and Transportation Committee Hearing Feb. 14, 2024, 1:00 p.m. Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Del. Korman, Vice-Chair Del. Boyce, sponsors Dels. Wilkins and Charkoudian and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Fixsen, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB305**, requiring the Department of the Environment to develop standards for outdoor lighting that take into account not only public health and safety but also energy consumption and impacts on the environment.

According to Energy.gov, while nighttime outdoor lighting provides for safe navigation, a sense of reassurance, detection of hazards, and enjoyment of spaces, the proliferation of unnecessary, excess, misdirected, and mistimed light at night wastes significant energy while also creating ecological disruptions including increased sky brightness and impacts on specific at-risk animal species. As cited by DarkSky International, in an average year in the U.S. alone, outdoor lighting uses about 120 terawatt-hours of energy, mostly to illuminate streets and parking lots. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, outdoor lighting consumes a significant amount of energy—about 1.3 quadrillion BTUs annually—costing about \$10 billion per year. According to Utilities One, by switching to LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights, cities can not only save energy but also reduce their carbon footprint. Energy-efficient street lighting can provide substantial cost savings for municipalities and local governments.

Given these facts, it is clear that standards are needed on public outdoor lighting to protect at-risk animal species, minimize sky brightness, and conserve energy. This last factor may be the most important, as our planet is facing catastrophic effects from climate change.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

Elizabeth Fixsen  
Savage, MD

*Sources Cited:*

Energy.gov. *Outdoor lighting: state and local solution center.* <https://www.energy.gov/scep/slsc/outdoor-lighting>

Energy.gov. *Light at night.* <https://www.energy.gov/eere/ssl/light-night>

Dark Sky International. *Light pollution wastes energy and money and damages the climate*  
<https://darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/energy-climate>