

2023 HB851 -JW Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jheanelle Wilkins

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 1, 2023

House Bill 851 - Department of the Environment – Development of Outdoor Lighting Standards

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **House Bill 851 - Department of the Environment – Development of Outdoor Lighting Standards**, which would require the Department of Education to develop outdoor lighting standards that consider certain impacts of outdoor lighting, as well as requires the Department to consult with the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Energy Administration, and the State Highway Administration in developing the standards.

This legislation seeks to address the serious environmental consequences for humans, wildlife, and our climate caused by unregulated lighting. Light pollution is a side effect of industrial civilization. Its sources include building exterior and interior lighting, advertising, commercial properties, offices, factories, streetlights, and illuminated sporting venues. The fact is that outdoor lighting used at night is inefficient, overly bright, poorly targeted, improperly shielded, and, in many cases, completely unnecessary. This light, and the electricity used to create it, is being wasted by spilling it into the sky, rather than focusing it on to the actual objects and areas that people want illuminated.

There is no clear scientific evidence that increased outdoor lighting deters crimes. It may make us feel safer, but has not been shown to make us safer. A study published by the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health found that streetlights don't prevent accidents or crime, but do cost a significant amount of money. The researchers looked at data on road traffic collisions and crime in 62 local authorities and found that lighting had no effect, whether authorities had turned them off completely, dimmed them, turned them off at certain hours, or substituted low-power LED lamps. According to the study, "[W]hen risks are carefully considered, local authorities can safely reduce street lighting saving both costs and energy ... without necessarily impacting negatively on road traffic collisions and crime."

House Bill 851 will ensure the health of Marylanders, as well as our wildlife and ecosystems. I urge the committee to give a **favorable report** for **House Bill 851 - Department of the Environment – Development of Outdoor Lighting Standards**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jheanelle Wilkins".

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins

Testimony HB 851.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Caprioglio

Position: FAV

My name is Lisa Caprioglio. I am a resident of District 20. I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 851, Department of the Environment--Development of Outdoor Lighting Standards.

Thank you, Delegate Wilkins, for listening to my concerns and sponsoring this bill. Excessively bright white lights on Long Branch Trail have negatively impacted my life every night since they were installed in January 2022.

I am fortunate to live less than 100 feet from Long Branch Trail in Takoma Park, with beautiful park views. Through my open windows, I hear a variety of birds, including, some nights, an owl.

In January 2022, Montgomery Parks replaced nine light fixtures along the trail near my home. The new LED lights were ten times brighter than recommended by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America and the color temperature was significantly whiter than the recommended 2200 Kelvin.

I could not sleep. The lights disrupt my body's circadian rhythms. Artificial light at night does not just impact me. A global study found that artificial light at night correlates with cancer.

I contacted Montgomery Parks requesting a change and they emailed this response: "The recent upgrades of the lights are part of our routine maintenance efforts, and the lighting is a type used throughout our park system. The lighting is directed towards the trail in accordance with Parks' installation practices, and our staff has determined the lighting is appropriate for the need it serves. With these considerations in mind, the lights will not be altered."

This is not limited to Montgomery Parks. New lights on the Carroll Avenue Bridge over Sligo Creek are bright white. Residents were simply told not to look at the lights. New lights on Park Valley Bridge over Sligo Creek are bright white.

This underscores the need for HB 851. Existing rules on outdoor lighting do not take current scientific standards into account. Staff with no special training can determine that "the lighting is appropriate for the need it serves." Intuition is taking precedence over science.

Dr Mark Southerland Testimony in Support of HB 851

Uploaded by: Mark Southerland

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly – Environment and Transportation Committee – March 1, 2023

HB 851 Department of the Environment – Development of Outdoor Lighting Standards

TESTIMONY OF DR. MARK SOUTHERLAND – **SUPPORT**

I am a professional ecologist who has served on the boards of Maryland Science Council, Maryland Water Monitoring Council, Safe Skies Maryland, Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board, Patapsco Heritage Greenway, and Howard County Conservancy. I am speaking on behalf of the Safe Skies Maryland, Maryland Ornithological Society (<https://mdbirds.org/safeskiesmaryland>).

Safe Skies Maryland, Lights Out Baltimore, American Bird Conservancy, and many others have been working for decades to reduce the negative impacts on both birds and people caused by excess artificial lighting at night. We have learned that it is not just lights from tall buildings in cities that attract birds and impact people—even ground level lighting of roads and parking lots can have a negative effect. In addition to luring birds into danger, and causing depression and other effects in people, unnecessary lights at night also waste energy, create greenhouse gases, and make it impossible to see the stars. The states of Minnesota and Illinois, as well as many other places in the United States, such as New York City, have recognized the importance of birds to sustainability and passed laws mandating bird safe lighting standards.

Maryland has the chance to do our part to protect birds, address climate change, improve human health, and save money for the generations to come.

We respectfully ask for your favorable report on HB 851.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Southerland", written over a large, horizontal, looping flourish.

Mark Southerland, PhD
Safe Skies Maryland
Columbia MD 21044

HB0851 - MDE - Development of Outdoor Lighting Sta

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO



Wes Moore
Governor
Aruna Miller
Lieutenant Governor
Paul J. Wiedefeld
Acting Secretary

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 851 – Department of Environment – Development of Outdoor Lighting Standards

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 851 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

HB 851 requires the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) to collaborate with several State agencies, including the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (SHA), to develop outdoor lighting standards.

The SHA follows its Lighting Design Guide when planning the location and installation of highway lighting infrastructure. The Lighting Design Guide considers safety, light pollution, energy conservation, and maintenance requirements in its recommendations.

The SHA is committed to maintaining an appropriate level of roadway lighting in areas with high volumes of pedestrian and bicycle traffic in our mission to achieve Vision Zero. Similarly, other roadway features, such as bridges and underpasses, require proper lighting infrastructure to provide a safe level of visibility. Appropriate lighting is an important component to ensuring a safe road network for all users.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates on House Bill 851.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch Baldwin
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Policy and Legislative Services
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-310-1056

Pilar Helm
Director
Office of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

MDE HB0851_LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Tyler Abbott

Position: INFO



March 01, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 851- Environment – Development of Outdoor Lighting Standards

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed HB 851 and would like to provide the following information. HB 851 would require the Department to develop outdoor lighting standards on or before October 1, 2024. MDE would be required to consult with the Maryland Energy Administration and Department of Health.

While the Department agrees setting standards are important for energy efficiency and public health, MDE does not currently have staff expertise in this area. In order to set these standards, the Department would need to obtain contractual assistance to develop outdoor lighting standards. .

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor HB 851 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at gabrielle.leach@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabrielle Leach".

Gabrielle Leach

cc: Christopher R. Hoagland, Air and Radiation Administration
The Honorable Jheanelle Wilkins