

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.