



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