

February 14, 2024
The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 250, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support—House Bill 305—Outdoor Lighting – Standards and Use of State Funds

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

My name is Richard Joyce, and I write on behalf of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation to express **support for House Bill 0305, Outdoor Lighting—Standards and Use of State Funds**.

The Xerces Society is a science-based non-profit that protects wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. Insects are crucial parts of healthy ecosystems, with important roles in pollination, nutrient cycling, and the food chain. Light pollution has historically been overlooked as a driver of declines in insect populations, but a growing body of research tells us that the rapid increase of artificial light at night is a cause for concern and action.

Maryland has over 30 species of fireflies, including five that are categorized as **critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable** on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. As nocturnal animals whose reproduction depends on dark nights, fireflies are emblematic of the many insects we stand to lose if we fail to address light pollution.

The advent of LED lighting has been a boon for energy efficiency, but it has also allowed for the proliferation of outdoor lighting that does not comply with the International Dark Sky Association's five criteria for responsible outdoor lighting: useful, targeted, low-level, controlled, and warm-colored.

Thankfully, light pollution is a problem that can be rapidly reversed. By requiring the development of outdoor lighting standards for Maryland and ensuring that state-funded outdoor lighting complies with these standards, we can provide safe and responsible outdoor lighting while minimizing harms to insects and other wildlife.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Joyce
Endangered Species Conservation Biologist
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation