



NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

Date: February 12, 2025

Bill: HB 452 - Outdoor Lighting - Guidance and Use of State Funds

Position: Support

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for HB 452 - Outdoor Lighting - Guidance and Use of State Funds. This legislation would require the Maryland Green Building Council to develop guidance for purchasing outdoor lighting that aligns with the American Medical Association.

Combatting climate change and saving wildlife and habitats are two of the National Aquarium's three strategic conservation goals. Bright, high-lumen lights that remain on during the evening hours are not energy efficient and contribute to harmful light pollution. This unwanted and excessive artificial light impacts human health and can significantly impact nocturnal wildlife. Disruptions to natural lighting patterns can fragment habitats and impact a species' ability to navigate, nest, mate, feed, and other behaviors key to survival. Unshielded light reduces road safety and exacerbates human susceptibility to illness¹. By instituting the American Medical Association's best practices for outdoor lighting, Maryland can improve wellbeing for people and create safer habitats for wildlife ranging from bats and birds to turtles and insects.

The National Aquarium has taken several steps to make our facilities more wildlife friendly, including installing bird safe glass, limiting indoor lighting during migratory seasons, and soon, through undertaking a project to install wildlife friendly exterior lighting on our campus. As part of our own commitment to combat climate change and save wildlife and habitats, the new lighting system will increase energy efficiency, reduce light pollution, and limit disruption to people and wildlife. We encourage the state to adopt similar strategies.

This legislation aligns state lighting standards with best practices that will reduce light pollution, advance the state's climate goals, and protect Maryland's wildlife. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 452.**

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¹ Motta 2024. We're All Healthier Under a Starry Sky. American Medical Association (AMA) Journal of Ethics 26(10). <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/were-all-healthier-under-starry-sky/2024-10>