



May 6, 2009

Memorandum of Support

In Assembly 7281 by Assembly member Rosenthal
In Senate 2714 by Thompson

Title: An Act to amend the environmental conservation law and the public service law, in relation to enacting the healthy, safe and energy efficient outdoor lighting act.

Provisions: This bill adds a new article to the environmental conservation law, the Healthy, Safe and Energy Efficient Outdoor Lighting Act. This act sets standards any state agency or public corporation's installation of new outdoor lighting. These standards direct light downward reducing light pollution and increase energy efficiency while making exceptions for public safety and federal law. It also makes exceptions for replacements that are part of a continuous design and historic preservation.

In addition this act gives the Commissioner of the DEC the ability to nominate "dark sky preserves" in areas of the state that are suitable for astronomical observation, nocturnal benefits to flora and fauna, or citizens desiring view of the night sky.

The bill also directs the DEC Commissioner to develop model outdoor lighting ordinances for cities towns and villages to save energy, reduce glare, and reduce unnecessary sky glow.

Finally, the commissioner will develop an information pamphlet on outdoor lighting to be distributed to municipalities, and electric service providers and their customers.

Statement of Support: Light pollution has slowly become an inescapable by-product of modern life, in spite of clear evidence that artificial illumination of the night sky can negatively impact human health and ecosystem function. Like air and water pollution, however, sensible standards can reduce light pollution and restore natural ambient darkness. The benefits are clear, ranging from a more conducive environment to human circadian rhythms to appropriate habitat conditions for rare and endangered nocturnal animal species. This bill creates standards that better direct outdoor light and increase energy efficiency. These standards will help minimize the pollution associated with energy use and will help to restore views of the night sky. For these reasons the Sierra Club strongly supports this bill.