

A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE REDUCTION OF LIGHT POLLUTION

WHEREAS, excessive and misdirected light is considered energy waste and misuse; and
WHEREAS, current research by the National Park Service indicates the exponential rate at which light pollution is increasing will leave almost no dark skies in the contiguous US by 2025 and so expected that less than 10% of people will ever in their lifetime EVER experience a starry night sky unless deliberate measures are taken ; <http://www.nature.ps.gov/air/lightscapes/>

WHEREAS, all Indiana state and national parks have an impaired view of the night sky due to light pollution; and
WHEREAS, Indiana state facilities have the duty and responsibility to demonstrate best practices and reduce all visible signs of energy waste;

WHEREAS, "The Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights: provides that all children should have the opportunity to: 1) Discovers Indiana's past, 2) splash in the water, 3) Play in a safe place, 4) Camp under the stars, 5) explore nature, 6) learn to swim, 7) play on a team, 8) follow a trail, 9) catch a fish, 10) Celebrate their heritage, and so the stars play a meaningful role of a child's heritage, history, culture and inspirational link to explore nature and cosmos.

WHEREAS, The American Medical Association has proclaimed that light pollution is a significant human health issue.

WHEREAS, The World Health Organization has proclaimed that shift work, due to exposure to artificial light at night through disruption of circadian, is a probable carcinogen.

WHEREAS, research studies suggest that use of artificial lighting results in behavioral changes and changes in the prevalence of vector species and modes of transmission.

Conclusion: Despite a surprising lack of studies, we conclude that existing evidence supports our hypothesis that artificial lighting leads to a higher risk of infection with vector-borne diseases.

WHEREAS, there is growing evidence by research studies suggest that excessive artificial outdoor illumination can cause circadian disruption and interfere with essential melatonin production resulting in higher cancer risks, cardio disease, obesity, sleep disorders and other serious medical issues.

WHEREAS, the night sky is a free resource for the enjoyment and edification of all the people, and

WHEREAS, light pollution represents wasted energy that is paid for with taxpayer dollars;

WHEREAS, light pollution lessens personal security and sense of well-being;

WHEREAS, light pollution reduces motorist and pedestrian safety;

WHEREAS, light pollution impinges upon the nocturnal kingdom with detrimental effects on numerous species of flora and fauna, which depend on the natural cycle of day and night for survival.

WHEREAS, establishing pre-determined standards for artificial outdoor illumination will provide Porter County residents, business owners, and developers with a clear set of guidelines to follow.

WHEREAS, a clear set of guidelines for artificial outdoor illumination will eliminate the need for business establishments to compete for visual attention by escalating outdoor lighting levels.

WHEREAS, a void remains in the creation and implementation of a modern, practical set of lighting standards which address the issues of energy consumption, environmental, and quality of life related to artificial outdoor illumination in a "holistic", effective manner.

WHEREAS, outdoor lighting is an integral part of modern living and commerce;

WHEREAS, better designs, applications, and existing outdoor lighting fixtures can reduce light pollution;

WHEREAS, Porter County seeks to lessen waste of taxpayer dollars;

WHEREAS, Porter County seeks to lessen the impact of light pollution;

WHEREAS, Porter County seeks to reduce the side effects of outdoor light while respecting the needs of users;

WHEREAS, light pollution negatively affects the environment of Porter County and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and

WHEREAS, light pollution is negatively affecting the value of Purdue University Calumet Astronomical Observatory as a teaching resource,

WHEREAS, Porter County acknowledges its responsibility to care for both the daytime and nighttime environments;

WHEREAS, Porter County has the potential to become a leader in the area of artificial outdoor illumination practices by promoting a diversified team effort implementing sound environmental policies which will benefit residents of the Porter County, students of the universities, guests who visit the Indiana Dunes National Shoreline and serve as a positive example for the nation to follow.

THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

a. The Porter County Board of Commissioners expresses our support for reduction of light pollution and improved starlight preservation practices in the State of Indiana.

b. The Porter County Board of Commissioners encourages municipalities and state agencies to adopt suitable outdoor lighting practices based on the principle of applying artificial light only where it is needed, when it is needed, and to only the levels needed, using the best safety, environmentally-sound and energy-efficiency standards available.

c. The Porter County Board of Commissioners encourages the State of Indiana provide artificial outdoor illumination engineering assistance to State agencies, municipalities, and businesses that seek to implement responsible outdoor lighting to conserve energy and preserve the important natural phenomenon of night regarding starlight.

d. The Porter County Board of Commissioners endorses reasonable uses of outdoor lighting for night-time safety, utility, security, productivity, enjoyment and commerce.

e. The Porter County Board of Commissioners encourages the conservation of energy and resources to the greatest extent possible.

f. The Porter County Board of Commissioners supports the minimization of adverse offsite impacts of light pollution including light trespass, and obtrusive light.

g. The Porter County Board of Commissioners desires to protect the natural environment in Porter County and in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in particular, from the adverse effects of artificial night lighting and its impact on state tourism and resources.

h. The Porter County Board of Commissioners endorses the reduction of light pollution and endorses the enhancement of the night sky for the enjoyment of the people in general and for Valparaiso University Astronomical Observatory in particular.

i. The Porter County Board of Commissioners encourages a program to develop guidelines to address light pollution in new and existing buildings and substantially reduce maximum outdoor lighting capability during non-business hours.

j. The Porter County Board of Commissioners supports educational outreach to provide citizens issues and recommendations of light pollution.

k. The Porter County Board of Commissioners supports voluntary cooperation and collaboration of the communities of Porter County, on a citizen, business, community organizational and civil levels for the reduction of light pollution of the cities and towns of Porter County for the benefit of bringing starlight and the Milky Way back over the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore for this and future generations.

DEFINITIONS:

Light pollution is errant and excessive outdoor lighting;

Glare is direct light that creates a veil of light that hinders the human eye's ability to see at night.

Light trespass is outdoor light that extends beyond the intended target into the property of others.

Sky glow is man-made light that reflects off the atmosphere and creates a dome of light overhead; capable of traveling 100 miles or more.