

March 10, 2025

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Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

LD 567—An Act to Designate the 2nd Week of May as Dark Sky Week

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Kaitlyn Nuzzo, Government Relations Director for the Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to offer written comments in support of LD 567.**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We work in more than 70 countries, and we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

Our organization is committed to the dual threats of biodiversity loss and climate change. We have identified and mapped a connected network of climate resilient sites across the United States, which we call the Resilient and Connected Network (RCN). The tool is a road map of "core forests and connectors" that shows where plant and animal species have the best chance to move away from growing climate threats.

Maine has some of the highest value areas within our Resilient and Connected Network tool, which means we have some of the best landscapes for plant and animal species to shift and adapt. While the impact of artificial lighting on wildlife is relatively new and an area in need of more study, we know wildlife can be affected by it in two main ways – disorientation and attraction/repulsion. Artificial lighting can affect foraging and reproductive behavior, biological clocks, predator-prey interactions, movement and dispersal patterns, community structure, and interactions among and within species.

For these reasons, TNC supports additional attention and focus on the benefits of dark sky efforts. LD 567 would designate Dark Sky Week as an opportunity to celebrate the ongoing efforts to protect Maine's dark skies and bring attention to the ongoing area of study. We hope you will support LD 567.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I am happy to answer questions at any time.