



**APPALACHIAN  
MOUNTAIN CLUB**  
SINCE 1876

Senator Joseph Baldacci  
Representative Suzanne Salisbury  
Joint Standing Committee on State & Local Government  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
SHS # 100  
Augusta ME 04333

March 11, 2025

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and the State & Local Government Committee,

The Appalachian Mountain Club is pleased to support LD 567, *An Act to Designate the 2nd Week of May as Dark Sky Week*.

AMC is a people-oriented conservation nonprofit. Our mission is the protection, understanding, and enjoyment of the outdoors. We have 6,200 members in Maine and manage 130,000 acres of forestland in Piscataquis County for multiple use, including sustainable forestry, backcountry recreation, and outdoor education. Our property has been designated an International Dark Sky Park by Dark Sky International in recognition of the quality of the night sky there.

We support LD 567 for several reasons. First, the world is experiencing a crisis of biodiversity loss, that is the loss of species and thus the complex ecosystems that support life on earth<sup>1</sup>. Among the most troubling indicators is the finding that North America's bird population has been reduced by 3 billion birds since 1970<sup>2</sup>. Eastern forest and boreal birds, both found in Maine, are among the hardest hit.

The good news is that western Maine holds the largest Globally Important Bird Area in the continental United States. Observing Dark Sky Week during peak spring migration has the potential to reduce the stress on migrating birds from the disruption of their internal navigation, feeding patterns, and reproduction.

Second, celebrating Dark Sky Week can educate the general public, making us all aware of the negative consequences of light pollution and leading to changed personal and public action. Light pollution negatively impacts not only birds but plants, insects, animals, and human health and safety. Yet the positive effects of halting light pollution are immediate and apparent.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.arcticwwf.org/newsroom/news/wwf-living-planet-report-2024-a-planet-in-crisis/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/bring-birds-back/>



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Fortunately, much of Maine still enjoys some of the darkest night skies east of the Mississippi and as we have seen over the past year, enjoying celestial events is increasingly popular. Thousands of visitors flocked to Maine to experience the April total eclipse of the sun. AMC hosts an annual *See the Dark* festival at our Maine lodges and we find that 75% of the attendees have never visited our property before. They are drawn to experience a dark night sky that they cannot see at home.

Maine can conserve an asset unique in the eastern United States, promoting astrotourism while improving the well-being of humans, birds, plants, insects and other animals. Designating an official Dark Sky Week will not achieve all of these results, but it is a modest start, and the Appalachian Mountain Club is pleased to support LD 567.

Thank you,

Eliza Townsend  
Maine Conservation Policy Director