

LD 1934, An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting

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My name is Jeff Worthington, and I have been on Long Pond in the Belgrade Lakes region since 1990. For over two decades, the night skies here were a source of immense joy and wonder for my family and friends. We spent countless evenings on our deck, gazing up at the truly pitch-black expanse and marveling at the breathtaking beauty of the Milky Way. Identifying planets and counting shooting stars were cherished pastimes, creating lasting memories.

However, since the redevelopment of the former Elizabeth Arden Estate in Mt. Vernon and Rome began in 2016, we have witnessed a disheartening transformation. The once vibrant Milky Way has begun to fade, and the number of visible stars has noticeably declined. Planets now appear fainter, and the thrill of spotting meteors has become a rare occurrence.

This degradation of our natural nighttime environment isn't just an aesthetic loss. Neighbors have also experienced direct negative impacts, with complaints of intrusive light shining into their bedrooms. Some have even had to resort to installing blackout curtains for the first time to mitigate this unwelcome trespass.

The existing lighting ordinances in both Mt. Vernon and Rome, relying on the principle of nuisance, have proven inadequate to address this growing problem. The lack of specific outdoor lighting guidelines has allowed the new development to introduce significant light pollution, manifesting as distracting roadside glare, objectionable light trespass into neighboring homes, and a pervasive skyglow from lights that now resemble a landing strip rather than preserving the tranquility of our rural landscape.

It is clear that action is needed at the local municipal level to effectively reduce and control light pollution. Therefore, **I strongly support LD 1934, "An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting,"** and believe its passage is crucial to protecting the natural beauty and quality of life in areas like the Belgrade Lakes region."