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Bremen  
LD 1934

I have been an amateur astronomer for many years and have participated in many outreach and educational activities, either on my own or through other organizations, such as Dark Sky Maine and Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters. I don't speak for either organization; my comments are my own and I support LD 1934 - An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting.

Over the past 30 years, I have seen the loss of dark skies in Maine. Places where I used to observe are much brighter now than they used to be. What hasn't changed is the enthusiasm I see from people visiting Maine in search of dark skies.

While participating in Stars Over Katahdin for Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters last year, I met a group of friends who had traveled from Plymouth Massachusetts just for the opportunity to see the Milky Way, since at least some of them had never seen it before. Fortunately for them, we had an incredibly clear sky that night and they had a great time looking at the Milky Way and the constellations as well as observing through the several telescopes volunteers had brought. This would have been impossible if we hadn't had dark skies. I've had similar experiences over the years with people vacationing in Maine or who had recently moved to Maine. So many were experiencing dark skies for the first time.

Maine is one of the few states east of the Mississippi that still has areas of dark skies available to the public. Dark skies are a natural resource, just like our coastline, lakes, rivers, and mountains, and deserve protection. Proper lighting doesn't mean no lighting. Safety for the public while minimizing excess light can and should be done. Efficient lighting also saves energy and costs less to use.