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Senator, District 4



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THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

LD 567 "An Act to Designate the 2nd Week of May as Dark Sky Week"
Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
March 10, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Beebe-Center and members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government: My name is Senator Stacey Guerin and I represent Senate District 4, which includes all of Piscataquis County and 11 towns in Penobscot County. I am here today to introduce LD 567 "An Act to Designate the 2nd Week of May as Dark Sky Week."

I am asking for your support of this bill, as I believe it holds great potential for both Maine's environment and its economy. Dark skies are essential for the safe migration of birds, and protecting them will help ensure that many species can continue their journeys with a reduction in the dangers posed by artificial light.

Maine plays a crucial role as a stopover along the migratory routes for many bird species. These birds rely on the stars and moon to navigate, and artificial light can disrupt their natural ability to do so, often leading them off course and causing dangerous collisions with buildings and other structures. By preserving dark skies, we provide birds with the opportunity to navigate safely and reduce the risk of fatalities. Additionally, migrating at night allows birds to conserve energy by avoiding the heat of the day, and artificial light disrupts their natural rhythms, making their journeys more challenging. Protecting dark skies ensures they can complete their migrations more safely and efficiently.

Beyond the environmental benefits, dark skies offer significant advantages for tourism. Astrotourism is a growing field, and many people travel to places with dark skies to stargaze and photograph the night sky. Maine's rural communities stand to benefit from this niche tourism, attracting visitors and extending the tourism season. Dark skies also enhance the overall experience of connecting with nature, which can lead to new opportunities for guided stargazing tours, astronomy festivals, and other events, bringing in more tourists and generating economic benefits year-round.

Promoting dark skies also raises awareness about the impact of light pollution, which is good for the environment and human health. As more people seek out places with darker skies for relaxation and rejuvenation, Maine can become a destination for those looking for a healthier, more peaceful environment.

By protecting our dark skies, we are helping migrating birds, creating new opportunities for tourism, and raising awareness about the importance of preserving our natural world. I also urge the committee to consider adding the second week of September to the bill, in addition to the May week. Both are crucial times for bird migration, and including this additional week would further safeguard these species during their journeys.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee
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