



Richard A. Bennett
Senator, District 18

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government on
LD 1934, An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting
May 12, 2025**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government: I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am pleased to cosponsor LD 1934, "An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting."

I have had the privilege of travelling the length and breadth of our state for personal, political, and business reasons. Maine's most wild, remote, and beautiful places hold a special place in my heart: Baxter State Park, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, the North Woods. As I think about those remarkable places, a memory that stands out to me is of the night sky blanketed by stars, reminding me that I am but a small part of a larger universe.

I am profoundly grateful that Baxter, the Allagash, and so much of the north woods have been conserved, and grateful to those, including my parents Dean and Sheila Bennett, who have ensured that they remain unspoiled for current and future generations to enjoy, to experience the same sense of awe that I have.

But why should a view of the night sky be something that we have to get in the car and drive to experience? After all, what is one of the first songs we all learned and then sang to our own children? For me, it was *Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star*. Enjoying the night sky is as basic to the human experience as breathing clean air and drinking clean water. It has shaped the human experience from the dawn of time.

Today one third of humanity, and 80% of North Americans, cannot see the Milky Way.¹ While Maine still enjoys dark night skies, especially in remote places, we are at risk of losing a fundamental experience, as so much of the eastern United States already has. Conserving this increasingly rare natural asset is as important as conserving land.

That's why I am proud to cosponsor this bill. LD 1934 is a modest measure to ensure that we can all see the night sky, by requiring that going forward public facilities use just as much light as is needed, pointed down, shielded, and that is of a warm color temperature. It requires municipalities to adopt local ordinances by 2028 and directs the Maine Office of Community Affairs to draft a model ordinance.

By passing this bill, we can set an example through state facilities, reduce carbon emissions, and save energy costs. Municipalities can encourage responsible outdoor lighting, with positive impacts on human and environmental health. We can attract visitors to Maine who want to experience the beauty and awe that they no longer have access to at home. Most

importantly, we can ensure that our children and grandchildren will have the opportunity to locate the Big Dipper and know the seasons are changing when Orion appears.

I ask you to vote Ought to Pass.

¹ <https://www.astronomy.com/science/one-third-of-humanity-cant-see-the-milky-way/>