

Testimony of Genevieve McDonald
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
Testifying in FAVOR of
L.D. 1934, An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting

May 12, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, I am Genevieve McDonald of Stonington. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in favor** of L.D. 1934, An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting.

I am testifying today in my capacity as a mom. One of our favorite things to do as a family is to spread a blanket on the lawn at night and look up. We point out constellations, track satellites, and wait for shooting stars. These moments are simple but magical. They help my kids feel connected—not just to the natural world, but to something bigger than themselves. The night sky sparks wonder, curiosity, and a kind of quiet joy that’s hard to find in today’s fast paced world.

But even in our rural island community, we cannot watch the aurora borealis or see the Milky Way from our house, due to unshielded security lights that stay on all night. I can make shadow puppets on my bedroom wall, and not by the light of the moon.

As someone with close connections to the working waterfront, I understand and appreciate why this security lighting exists—to protect the property and livelihoods of those who work on the water. But, I assure you, no one is stealing a skiff from my front yard at the top of the hill overlooking our harbor, far above sea level.

LD 1934 doesn’t ask anyone to turn off their lights. It promotes responsible, well-designed lighting that does the job without spilling into the sky. It protects the dark without

compromising safety or function. The light pollution that besieges our rural community could be solved by shielding, and directing the light down to where it is needed.

I don't want to cast the owners of these working waterfront properties as careless, I have spoken with them and they are open to making modifications to their lighting systems—but no one knows what is needed. What is the specific product, brand and model that would alleviate the problem? A municipal conversation through the process of adopting an ordinance would bring this information, "to light."

We teach our kids to take care of the world around them. This bill is part of that same ethic. It's about being thoughtful with how we use our shared resources—in this case, the night sky. I want my children—and all Maine kids—to grow up in a place where they can still see the stars.

Please support LD 1934, for families like mine, and for the future we all want to pass down. Thank you for your time and consideration.