

## 05.11.2025 In Support of LD1934 – An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and colleagues on the Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Jenny Ward, and I reside in Greenville, Maine — a small town that has had a big role in the preservation of Maine's Dark Skies. Greenville serves as the gateway for the **Appalachian Mountain Club's Maine Woods Dark Sky Park**, the only officially designated Dark Sky Park in all New England.

During my employment with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), **I led the effort to obtain this prestigious designation for AMC's 114,000-acre property.** Because of this and Greenville's efforts, visitors to the greater Moosehead Lake Region are offered an awe-inspiring night sky experience, unobscured by light pollution, that rivals the clarity and brilliance found in the most remote Arctic regions of the world. This has increased visitation and marked the nighttime experience as a new way to come and enjoy the outdoors and the many things happening in the skies above us.

Understanding the critical importance of preserving our night skies, the Town of Greenville also embraced responsible lighting by updating its **Outdoor Lighting and Sign Lighting Ordinances** to align with Dark Sky standards. Lighting technology has changed so much in the last 10 years that many community lighting ordinances reference outdated technology. Appropriate lighting standards are also critical to pollination, migration, circadian rhythms, food production, public safety and so much more. This commitment reflects a deep awareness that the night sky is not just a view — it is vital to our health, our environment, and our identity.

Remarkably, even before these ordinances were formally adopted, major construction projects in Greenville — such as **Northern Light CA Dean Memorial Hospital** and **Hammond Lumber Company** — were asking how they could be better stewards of the night sky and install night-friendly lighting. This demonstrates that the movement toward responsible lighting is not a burden, but a shared value. It's also important to note: **Dark Sky-friendly fixtures save thousands of dollars a year on electricity costs and are no more expensive than standard lighting.**

One of the most impactful initiatives was Greenville's collaboration with its utility pole provider to convert all **188 of the town's streetlights** to be fully Dark Sky compliant. In the **first year alone**, this change resulted in **nearly \$10,000 in savings** — money that would have been wasted on over-lighting.

In an era when true darkness has become rare, preserving the night sky is one of the most powerful and meaningful gifts we can offer ourselves and future generations.

LD1934 is not just about reducing light pollution — it is about saving money, increasing visitation, and reducing electricity consumption. I urge you to vote, ought to pass and help Maine continue to lead by example in preserving our natural nightscapes.

Thank you for your time and for considering my testimony.

Jenny Ward