

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs 2008 Resolutions

RES. NO. 3: SUPPORT REDUCTION OF UNNECESSARY NIGHT TIME LIGHTING

BACKGROUND:

The impacts of light pollution include climate change due to energy waste, impacts on human health, wildlife disorientation, and the esthetics of the nighttime sky.

Worldwide climate change is attributed to pollution from excess use of fossil fuels that contributes to heat trapping pollutants in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide. One component of that problem is the energy generated to produce unneeded nighttime lighting. As leapfrog development sprawls from urban areas into undeveloped areas, inefficient and unneeded night lighting contributes to global warming. Human health issues such as melatonin suppression have been identified. Bright lights near seashores where leatherback turtles hatch have caused them to move inland to their death instead of into the sea where they can survive. Millions of migrating birds are disoriented and killed each year by crashing into brightly lighted buildings and towers. National Parks have instituted programs to eliminate lighting within their boundaries but they cannot control lighting from nearby urban areas. There is no place within the boundaries of Death Valley National Park where the glare from the brightly lit casinos of Las Vegas does not reduce the esthetic quality of starlit skies. Wasted and inefficient night lighting contributes to all of these problems.

Well-designed and efficient lighting can easily save energy. Lighting can be directed downward where it is needed instead of upward into the sky by proper shielding and design. Technology is developing energy efficient lighting by using diodes and fluorescent bulbs instead of incandescent lighting. Cities such as Tucson, Arizona in cooperation with nearby astronomical observatories have dramatically reduced light pollution while saving large amounts of taxpayer dollars at the same time. Several cities and counties across the nation have already, or are in the process of, adopting ordinances to reduce unnecessary nighttime lighting in order to save money and reduce contributions to climate change.

RESOLUTION: The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs supports the reduction of unnecessary nighttime lighting.

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