

Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



March 7, 2022

Esteemed Chairs Cohen and Gresko,
Members of the Environment Committee:

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5289, *An Act Concerning the Nighttime Lighting of State-Owned Buildings at Certain Times for the Protection of Birds*. WestCOG suggests you consider expanding the bill to **require all new and replacement luminaires on state buildings and facilities to carry the Fixture Seal of Approval of the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA)**. This Approval provides objective, third-party certification for luminaires (lighting fixtures) that minimize glare, reduce light trespass, and do not pollute the night sky.

Light pollution is a serious problem, especially in urban and suburban areas such as those that characterize much of Connecticut. Poorly designed lighting fixtures contribute disproportionately to light pollution, disrupting plants and animals, obscuring the night sky, and wasting energy, without providing any benefits. (Fixtures that radiate light upward or create blinding glare do not improve safety or security.)

IDA lighting fixtures are readily available, at competitive prices, for many uses and in a variety of architectural forms. Municipalities may require their use through zoning; however, the state is exempt from such regulations. WestCOG asks that your Commission require the state to follow best practices in tackling light pollution by requiring, where possible, that all new and replacement state luminaires be IDA approved.

For more information about light pollution and dark-sky friendly lighting, see the IDA's website at <https://www.darksky.org/>.

Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis R. Pickering". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Francis R. Pickering
Executive Director