

Esteemed Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for considering the resolution supporting and declaring North Dakota Dark Sky Week during the week of 21-28 April 2025. Dark Sky Week is a global event calling attention to the proliferation of light pollution caused by artificial light at night. The vast majority of U.S. residents, including North Dakotans, live under light polluted skies, and the consequences are many in number.

As noted in the North Dakota Monitor piece from Wednesday 22 January, this timeframe falls during peak migration season for numerous bird species that find critical habitat and stopover places during their journey. Our avian friends are not the only ones threatened by the loss of a natural night, however. Numerous medical issues in humans have been linked to exposure to shorter-wavelength (blue-violet) lighting during periods of darkness. Sleep disorders, cancers (including breast and prostate), diabetes, obesity, eyesight problems from early macular degeneration, mental and neurological disorders including bipolar, depression and even potentially earlier onset of dementia.

Additionally, the loss of night, the loss of our dark skies, can create a disconnect from our shared cultural history of the night sky. Without which human may have never garnered inspiration towards science, art, and faith.

Lastly, North Dakota has enormous potential to exploit our dark skies towards the biggest trend in tourism – astro-tourism. One only has to look towards Colorado, Montana, Utah, and other places to find extensive parks that are part of DarkSky International’s Dark Sky Place Program, which awards designations and promotes locations that have worked to educate about and limit light pollution. From the Pembina Gorge, to the Sheyenne Grasslands, to Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the wider Maah Daah Hey and Badlands region, along with everything in between, we have space and parks with which to offer a nation and world hungry to experience the awe and wonder of a night sky.

Thank you again for your consideration of this vital resolution. I will stand ready to provide additional information and testimony in support of this, as well as any other light pollution measures the North Dakota State Government decides to take up.

V/r,

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