



June 5, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to announce that the Rockland Astronomy Club wholeheartedly supports and endorses the NY Light Pollution Control Bills A6950 and S3003, and urges all legislators to support the energy conservation bills. It's clear from recent polls that the majority of people in New York are concerned about the problem of light pollution, and want action taken to help solve the problem. Certainly a progressive state like New York cannot lag behind where so many other jurisdictions around the country, and around the world, have already taken action. It's hard to find a place on earth right now where the entrenched glare and energy waste is so pervasive, and still nothing has been done to combat it here in New York. The words of electric utilities and the State of New York, urging more energy conservation, shall ring very hollow with all the energy waste and glare from bad and wasteful lighting throughout the state, unless this bill is made law and action is taken. The need for better ways to save energy, save money, and protect the environment cannot be understated. We believe the time is now to sign the bill and make a proactive move toward solving a problem of which the public and the government are now keenly aware.

We are sure that there is opposition to the bill from entrenched interests that are resistant to change. It seems obvious to us that improvement always requires someone to change something, and some will inevitably be resistant to that change. We urge the legislature to rebuff and mitigate the resistance to change that exists out there. Certainly electric utilities, municipalities, and some government agencies have reasons why they might not want this legislation to become law. In our opinion, the will of the people needs to be satisfied, not the profit driven motives of electric utilities. Public agencies and municipalities need to be reminded that the authority and right to home rule that they enjoy is for the purpose of *servicing the people*. The people and the legislature made their views crystal clear by passing the original bill, A5352. Government agencies and public corporations should acquiesce to the demands of the people and the legislature by supporting the new bills A6950 and S3003.

Please consider a case in point. Those of us who have lived in New York since the 1960s can remember what life was like in New York City before the Clean Air Act came to pass. The horrific eye-tearing air pollution that was endured by auto passengers on the George Washington Bridge in those days would never be tolerated today. People couldn't imagine it today. Back then there was plenty of resistance to the clean air act by those who said it would never work or that it would cost too much. Today the nation is much better for it. The economy and the public utilities are none the worse for wear over it. The utilities even profess to be proud of the progress that has been made, *after they were forced to comply at first*. Clearly somebody had to do

the initial forcing back then. Where would we be today without it? If the act weren't passed circa 1970, then certainly it would have passed later anyway. So we ask a question... Why is there not yet a light pollution control law in NY State? Certainly it will come about some day, but why not today? The Rockland Astronomy Club strongly advocates passage of the bills. It will no doubt be marked as an important turning point in national efforts to promote environmental protection and energy conservation. After they see the benefits of this law, the people will realize how much better off we all have become, and they will be grateful for it.

Signed,

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With members throughout SouthEastern NY and Northern New Jersey

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