



# Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented On	9/8/16
Type of Action	Recommendation
Status/Result	New Business

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## **S.A. Resolution #7 Request for Reconsideration of Lighting policy on the Slope**

ABSTRACT: The Student Assembly requests the University reconsider putting new lights on the slope, or, at the very least, use environmentally-friendly lights on the slope.

**Sponsored by: Mitch McBride '17, Varun Devatha '19**

**Whereas**, light pollution is shown to be detrimental to ecosystems and one of the worst types of pollutants in urban environments;

**Whereas**, scientific evidence shows that artificial light (especially whiter light with its shorter wavelengths and higher blue component) is harmful to nocturnal animals, including bats, insects, amphibians, and migrating birds;

**Whereas**, it is also harmful to humans, who suffer melatonin deficiency from exposure to bright white full spectrum light (which tricks the body into thinking it is daytime and reduces melatonin production, causing insomnia and increasing cancer risk; this is why doctors increasingly recommend against using tablets, smartphones, and other LED-lit screens shortly before bedtime);

**Whereas**, outdoor lighting is powered by fossil fuel at a time when Cornell is trying to reduce our carbon footprint, and the world is currently experiencing the severe weather that is probably a sign of climate change; U.S. CO2 emissions per capita are twice as high as the European average, and many times higher than the poor countries that will suffer most from the effects of climate change,

**Whereas**, light pollution diminishes Cornell's natural beauty and obscures the starry night sky, so that more light would spoil the iconic views from Libe Slope; more light would also reduce the population of fireflies on summer evenings, and more "sky glow" would further diminish the ability of Cornell astronomers to use the Observatory,

**Whereas**, there is no scientific evidence that additional nighttime outdoor lighting results in increased safety; counterintuitive though it may sound, bright white light (such as that produced by white LEDs) is often LESS safe than either darkness or warmer (yellow) light. Many experiments have shown that crime actually increases when outdoor lighting is added to a previously unlit area. The added light may create a feeling of safety, but it reduces awareness of one's surroundings (the pupil contracts when exposed to white light, so you lose night vision and the ability to see beyond your immediate area); criminals benefit from the ability to hide in shadows while observing potential victims approach under artificial illumination. This is precisely

43 what makes parking lots, brightly lit alleys, and subway platforms (which are  
44 illuminated 24-7) the highest crime locations in American cities;  
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46 **Whereas**, flashlights (which can be powered by solar cells or rechargeable batteries to  
47 reduce their environmental impact to near zero) are easily available to everyone, and  
48 a very reasonable alternative to lighting up several acres of Libe Slope all night, every  
49 night for the "benefit" of the occasional pedestrian;  
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51 **Be it therefore resolved**, that the Student Assembly asks the administration to  
52 reconsider adding any more lights to Libe Slope and that, if it does, the lights added  
53 should be few, placed no more than a few feet from the ground, and should be  
54 warmer and yellower in color (similar in spectrum to high-pressure sodium  
55 streetlight bulbs) than the cool white LEDs currently proposed (which are more akin  
56 to the overhead fluorescent tubes used in grocery stores).  
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58 Be it therefore resolved, the Student Assembly requests the administration that LEDs on the  
59 slope be replaced with yellow-sodium or amber LED lights.  
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61 Be it therefore resolved that the Student Assembly recommends that the administration reforms  
62 existing lights on the slope to be motion detecting.  
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65 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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67 **Mitchell McBride '17**

68 *Vice President of Internal Operations, Student Assembly*  
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70 **Mildred Elizabeth Sanders**

71 *Professor of Government, Cornell University*  
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73 **Emily Dong**

74 *Member of the President's Sustainable Campus Committee*  
75

76 **Samsuda Khem-nguad**

77 *Member of ECO*  
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79 **Marcel Ramos**

80 *Chair, Student Assembly Environmental Committee*  
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82 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 8/30/16)*