

Dear Governor DeWine,

Find below two student-written letters pertinent to our advocacy,

1) My name is Tony Li, and I am a senior at Olentangy Liberty High School. I am writing to you on behalf of young residents who are deeply concerned about the growing issue of light pollution in our state. As a supporter of the Dark Sky Initiative and a co-founder of the Starlight Initiative—a youth-led group dedicated to mitigating light pollution—we believe Ohio has a unique opportunity to lead the way in preserving our night skies. This effort would not only protect the environment but also improve public health and conserve energy.

For me, the night sky represents much more than just a natural wonder—it symbolizes a deep cultural connection. As a second-generation Chinese American, the stars have always been a reminder of my heritage, just as they have been for countless other communities, including Native Americans. Protecting our skies is not an abstract, far-off idea; it's about preserving a shared piece of cultural and natural heritage that defines who we are. As a 17-year-old watching the world change rapidly, I feel a personal responsibility to ensure that future generations, including my own children, can gaze up at the same stars that have inspired humanity for centuries.

My interest in light pollution began during research for my school's Speech and Debate team, where I stumbled upon a startling statistic: in just 20 years, the stars could become invisible due to unchecked light pollution. This realization set me on a mission to bring attention to this urgent issue, which has received far too little focus despite its far-reaching consequences.

We hope to work with leaders like you to create meaningful change for Ohio's future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Tony Li

2) Les Brown, former Ohio State Representative, and one of the world's most renowned motivational speakers once said, "Shoot for the moon, and if you miss you will still be among the stars." But in the critical state of the current world, the genuine reality is that if you miss the moon, you'll be lost. No. This isn't an attack on the work ethic of modern society, but instead, a literal fact outlining the unprecedented increase in light pollution. Starlit skies, which once fostered the creation of tales and fables, have now only become accessible to the few living in rural areas. As a supporter of the Dark Sky Initiative and a co-founder of the Starlight Initiative—a youth-led mission committed to reversing light pollution trends—we advocate for preserving our night skies.

Today, the sky is washed by a dull, artificial glow, but at least I've grown up with memories of a clear sky. Looking at current statistics, however, future generations will have none. That's why preserving the night sky is important to me. It's more than just the impacts on public health and conserving energy; it's ensuring that our future shares a piece of cultural heritage with us. What I once thought of as a simple

inconvenience became more troubling the more I learned. Not only am I being robbed of the chance to experience the wonder of the night, but I'm also discovering that wildlife and human health are also paying a price.

The concern of light pollution is urgent and action must be taken as soon as possible. I kindly request that Ohio take a leading role in this mission.

Thanks for your consideration,
Tarun Batchu

Advocacy: We are writing to you as young residents deeply concerned about the growing issue of light pollution in our state. As supporters of the Dark Sky Initiative and the founders of the Starlight Initiative, a youth-led group focused on mitigating light pollution, we believe Ohio has a unique opportunity to lead in preserving the beauty of our night skies while improving public health, conserving energy, and protecting the environment.

As high school students, we are committed to preserving the night skies, which hold immense cultural and historical significance for generations to come. The future of our environment, nation, and policymaking rests in the hands of today's youth.

Light pollution, caused by the overuse and improper design of outdoor lighting, is a rapidly growing problem in Ohio. Studies show that it not only obscures our view of the stars but also affects wildlife, human health, and energy consumption. According to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), poorly designed lighting impacts ecosystems by confusing the migratory patterns of birds, disrupting the reproductive cycles of amphibians, and altering the behavior of nocturnal animals, many of which are native to Ohio's rich forests and natural reserves.

Moreover, light pollution has been linked to negative human health outcomes, including increased stress, sleep disorders, and disruptions to circadian rhythms. The American Medical Association has acknowledged the risks of overexposure to artificial lighting at night, urging cities and states to adopt regulations that reduce excessive light.

Ohio, with its many parks and rural communities, is uniquely positioned to adopt policies that protect dark skies while maintaining safety and security. Cities like Flagstaff, Arizona, have already passed comprehensive light pollution ordinances that encourage the use of energy-efficient, shielded lighting. Ohio could follow suit by enacting state-level legislation that encourages municipalities to:

1. Implement fully shielded lighting fixtures that direct light downward and reduce glare.
2. Encourage energy-efficient, low-intensity lighting, particularly in residential and commercial areas.
3. Promote the use of timers and motion sensors to minimize unnecessary lighting in public spaces.
4. Designate Dark Sky Reserves in rural areas to promote eco-tourism and protect wildlife habitats.

These measures would not only enhance the quality of life for Ohio residents but also contribute to the state's energy conservation efforts. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, reducing light pollution

through innovations that minimize energy waste caused by the 35% of outdoor lighting misused due to poor lighting designs can save up to \$3 billion annually across the country, with significant savings possible in Ohio. This is not only an environmental issue but also an economic one that calls for change. These reductions are relevant for Ohio as well, where cities could experience significant cost savings by implementing more responsible lighting strategies, such as using shielded fixtures and motion-sensitive controls.

The Dark Sky Initiative, supported by the IDA, aims to reduce light pollution through public education and the implementation of smart lighting policies. In Ohio, we have already seen positive steps taken in cities like Dayton, which has enacted outdoor lighting codes to mitigate the negative impacts of light pollution. However, more needs to be done at the state level to ensure that all communities benefit from these protections.

As young persons who value the environment and the future of our planet, we believe Ohio can take meaningful action to combat light pollution. By enacting these regulations, you will help preserve the natural beauty of our night skies for generations to come while improving public health and sustainability.

We urge you to consider introducing or supporting legislation that addresses light pollution and advances Ohio's participation in the Dark Sky Initiative. We would be more than happy to provide further information or discuss this issue with you or your team.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue and for your continued leadership in improving the well-being of Ohio residents.

Sincerely,

Starlight Team