



# Hawai'i Audubon Society

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## Hawai'i Audubon Society Opposes Bill 109 (2025) Amending Chapter 20.35, Maui County Code, Relating to Outdoor Lighting (WAI-11)

Dear Chair Cook, Vice-Chair Sugimura, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Audubon Society, I extend our heartfelt gratitude for Maui's leadership on addressing harmful outdoor light pollution. In 2023, Maui set a high but reasonable bar. That existing ordinance: **protects endangered wildlife** including seabirds and sea turtles disoriented by bright or blue-rich lighting near the coast; **supports cultural, astronomical, and tourism value** by preserving dark night skies, which are integral to navigation traditions and the island's appeal; **encourages energy conservation**, more wildlife-aware lighting design, and challenges manufacturers to produce fixtures with measurable spectral specifications.

I and many of our members have seen firsthand the egregious impacts that light pollution has on our wildlife on every electrified island in the State. For this reason, we **oppose bill 109 as currently written** because several changes would significantly weaken protections for Maui's endangered wildlife and treasured dark skies.

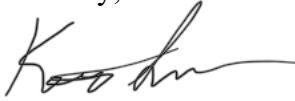
- **Roadway lighting exemption:** By removing road and highway lighting from the requirement to limit blue light to 2%, the bill creates a major source of skyglow and disorientation risk for seabirds and sea turtles. The  $\leq 2\%$  blue 2022 standard, was a landmark step in aligning Maui with best practices for wildlife-friendly lighting.
- **Ocean lighting safeguard:** The current ordinance wisely requires shielding to ensure *no light shines over the ocean*. The proposed amendment softens this to fixtures "not aimed at the ocean." This change risks increased coastal light trespass, undermining years of conservation gains.
- **Weakened enforcement:** By shifting rulemaking from "must adopt" to "may adopt," the proposal reduces the County's ability to ensure consistent, transparent, and enforceable standards. Predictable compliance is essential both for residents and for the businesses investing in compliant fixtures.
- **Loss of nighttime curfews:** Repealing the lamp-type usage table eliminates the long-standing requirement for many lights to be extinguished overnight, a proven dark-sky and energy-saving measure.

Maui has been recognized for leadership in protecting endangered seabirds, sea turtles, and night skies. The current ordinance reflects thoughtful compromises among safety, culture, and conservation. Weakening these safeguards would jeopardize both our wildlife and our reputation as a world leader in dark-sky protection.

We urge the Committee to **retain the strong protections adopted in 2022**, especially the  $\leq 2\%$  blue light limit for all fixtures (including roadways) and the prohibition on coastal light spill. At minimum, please consider amendments to preserve these critical safeguards.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your continued commitment to protecting Maui's natural and cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Swindle', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Keith Swindle  
Executive Director  
Hawai'i Audubon Society