

January 18th, 2007

Dear Mr. Breitzkreuz:

Thank you for returning my call this morning; unfortunately circumstance did not allow me to contact you a little earlier in the month when it might have been possible for me to deliver this in person.

I am approaching you today as a member of the Saskatchewan Light Pollution Abatement Committee (LPAC), which is in turn a committee of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC). LPA groups operate not only across Canada, but around the world, with the primary purpose of educating both the public and all levels of governments into the real world implications of poorly designed lighting.

The RASC committees are not environmental groups *per se*, although some members personally may be; the primary purpose of their formation years ago is to stop the growing encroachment of light into areas where is not needed. As our wildlife is finding it increasingly difficult to avoid our spreading population, astronomers and research facilities are constantly similarly challenged to find areas to pursue their research/hobbies.

On our side is the fact that having 'anti-light pollution' policies in place would not only be good for the environment, it would actually save money. Operating *against* us is the fact that most people do not see light as a pollutant in itself, nor consider the incredible amounts of pollutants generated by burning coal to run unneeded, or poorly designed, lighting. It always amazes us that people can understand that pollution can be reduced by mixing gasoline with ethanol (10%), but can't seem to understand the savings inherent in installing street lights that light the street and not the sky (40-50%), or in turning off that unused dawn-to-dusk yard light (100%). Simply put, if common sense as to lighting were employed, those unattainable Kyoto targets would be surpassed without breaking a sweat or breaking the bank. To us astronomers, why people don't get that is as great a mystery as the origin of the universe.

Currently, we are attempting to raise awareness of the benefits of better lighting practice on a number of levels, many explained in the enclosed materials. The reason I wanted to contact you, besides giving you a heads-up on the *local* issues, is so that you may consider taking our questions to Ministers Baird and Lunn on our behalf, those being as to why there is no light pollution component included in emerging environmental legislation. Other members across the country will be (and have been) writing to their MPs as well. We don't believe light pollution has ever gotten a fair hearing, because as soon as the word 'pollution' is mentioned, one tends to be dismissed along with the fringe element (the global warming alarmists, tree huggers and David Suzuki's of the world).

But, as usual, I am rambling.

To hopefully give you an overview of the issue, enclosed you will find:

- a letter to suggest including light abatement in the federal government's "Made-in-Canada" solution, from myself to former Environment Minister Rona Ambrose (also copied to you at the time), and 'her' response;
- a letter from a few years ago to Yorkton City Council attempting to get their ear on local lighting issues;
- an outline for a lighting bylaw for cities, culled from the bylaws of cities that have already implemented light abatement laws. Note that this can be easily adapted for use by hamlets or for national purposes;
- two letters from individuals regarding a current battle between rural dwellers and the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Association with regards to a new casino being built south of Saskatoon. This same issue will be fought in the near future wherever new casinos are built or renovated, including with the new Painted Hand casino project on West Broadway in Yorkton;
- brochures published by the *International Dark-Sky Association* and by the *RASC - Calgary Centre*.

In a nutshell, we just don't get why municipal, provincial and federal governments avoid this conservation issue in their environmental plans. Many Canadian cities are already world leaders when it comes to proper lighting, and, properly presented, it could be a very progressive step to have Canada seen as a leader internationally. If you want spokespeople with a high profile, check with our Canadian astronauts who have been to space.

I hope I've explained this satisfactorily for the time being. I will attempt to keep you up to date on local and federal efforts as they come up.

Thank you in advance for your time,

Jim Huziak

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