

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM REPORT



REPORT TO THE 2021 LEGISLATURE

Report on the Statewide Dark Skies Protection
Advisory Committee

Act 185, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2017

December 2020

Legislative Report on the Statewide Dark Skies Protection Advisory Committee Pursuant to Act 185, SLH 2017

Act 185, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2017, established a Dark Skies Protection Advisory Committee to assist the University of Hawai'i in developing a statewide dark night skies protection strategy. The advisory committee is placed within the University of Hawai'i for administrative purposes. In addition, the University of Hawai'i and the advisory committee were charged with submitting reports to the Hawai'i State Legislature on its initial findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2018, and thereafter report updated findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of each of the regular sessions of 2019, 2020, and 2021.

The advisory committee consists of the following persons, or their authorized representatives: the president of the University of Hawai'i; the comptroller; the director of business, economic development, and tourism; the director of health; the director of transportation; the chairperson of the board of land and natural resources; the mayor of each county; the administrator of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; the director of the University of Hawai'i institute for astronomy; and a representative of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. The president of the University of Hawai'i is empowered to designate the chairperson of the committee and has designated Dr. Vassilis Syrmos, University of Hawai'i Vice President for Research and Innovation, as the president's representative and chairperson.

The advisory committee has met and identified a number of issues requiring further technical review and discussion. The committee has identified a number of current lighting projects, key parties involved (e.g. suppliers and contractors), and project sponsor priorities and constraints. The committee has also identified potential sources of additional information and expertise that are not currently represented on the committee but may be approached to provide input.

The current issues include replacement of streetlights with LED fixtures on Maui, which has been stalled due to legal action related to wildlife protection. Like other LED light replacements, no environmental assessment was performed, and an environmental assessment will now be performed. The environmental impact of changes to LED lighting requires further discussion by this committee.

Lower color temperature LED lighting has become much more energy efficient in the last year, and this is another item that the committee must evaluate. Lower blue content lighting is desirable for many environmental reasons including protection of endangered species, protection of astronomy, protection of human health, visibility and aesthetics.

Poor lighting, including light trespass is a growing problem in Hawai'i. An example is high luminance sources shining onto public roadways and creating glare and loss of visibility. This is another topic that the committee needs to address.

The advisory committee did not meet this year due to the pandemic and does not yet have substantive findings and recommendations to report to the 2021 Hawai'i Legislature. The advisory committee hopes to convene a meeting soon and will continue to meet and work toward such findings and recommendations for future reports.