



Government of the District of Columbia
**Advisory Neighborhood
Commission 6C**

April 20, 2017

The Hon. Mary M. Cheh
Chair, Committee on Transportation and the Environment
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 108
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Testimony for Upcoming Council Roundtable on Streetlight Modernization

Dear Councilmember Cheh:

On April 12, 2017, at a duly noticed, regularly scheduled monthly meeting of ANC 6C, with a quorum of six out of six commissioners and the public present, the commissioners voted 6-0 to adopt the positions set forth in this letter as our testimony for the May 3 roundtable.

ANC 6C strongly opposes the installation of cool white (4,000 Kelvin or higher) LED bulbs as part of the District Department of Transportation's Streetlight Modernization Project, and urges the installation of LED bulbs rated 3,000 Kelvin or lower. (This includes the immediate plan, now under moratorium, to install LED lighting along Massachusetts Ave NE.) We base our objections to the high-temperature bulbs on several grounds.

First, 4000K LED bulbs are detrimental to the character of DC's neighborhoods. Streets throughout the District are lit with warm white lights with color temperatures below 3,000 Kelvin. Such lighting provides effective, comfortable, and pleasant lighting that most people enjoy. Conversely, 4000K bulbs produce a harsh light high in blue tones that is widely regarded as unpleasant or irritating. This lighting is inappropriate throughout the District, but especially in our many historic districts (including the Capitol Hill historic district making up much of ANC 6C), where the harsh lighting conditions would detract from the historic character of such neighborhoods.

In addition, 4000K LED bulbs produce glare that is a hazard to public safety. The amount of glare produced by high-Kelvin bulbs is much greater than those of lower Kelvin bulbs. In addition to being a source of eye strain for all people, the glare is especially hazardous for nighttime drivers on streets lit with 4000K lamps. Decreased visibility for drivers puts all residents and visitors on our streets at risk.

Finally, 4000K bulbs present potential hazards to human health and the environment. As noted by the American Medical Association, the high content of blue light from high-Kelvin

bulbs is known to suppress production of melatonin, a natural regulator of our circadian rhythms. Disruption of sleep cycles can result in multiple cascading negative health effects.

We understand that 4000K LEDs are slightly more efficient than lower-Kelvin bulbs, but installation of warm white LEDs instead will still result in significant operational and maintenance costs over the current high pressure sodium bulbs, and with no extra installation costs. The advantages of LED bulbs over the current system will still be realized if LEDs at or below 3000K are installed, and the negative impacts we've described will be avoided.

Accordingly, ANC 6C strongly recommends that the District Department of Transportation (1) install bulbs rated 3000K or below during any streetlight upgrade to LED bulbs, and (2) ensure that all new streetlights are properly shielded and directed down and away from residences. We urge the Council to act to ensure these conditions are met as the District upgrades its street lighting.

Thank you for giving great weight to the views of ANC 6C.

Sincerely,



Karen Wirt
Chair, ANC 6C

cc: The Hon. Charles Allen, Councilmember, Ward 6
Leif Dormsjo, Director, DDOT