



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the creation of guidelines for requiring owners and operators of exterior lights to shield the lights when they create undue glare.

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Int. No. 1109

By Council Member Gerson, Barron, Fidler, Gentile, Jackson, James, Lappin, Liu and Weprin

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the creation of guidelines for requiring owners and operators of exterior lights to shield the lights when they create undue glare.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Legislative findings and intent. The Council finds that technological advances have led to the production of brighter light sources, often resulting in excessive lighting, energy waste, and light pollution when lighting is not designed to direct the light toward the intended target. Over time, the nighttime environment has become impacted by the effects of light pollution which include glare, light trespass, and skyglow, all of which affect our quality of life. Light pollution makes it harder to observe the night sky, and scientific studies have demonstrated negative and destructive effects of altered nocturnal environments on species and ecosystems. Recent research indicates that exposure to light at night can upset normal human

circadian rhythms, thereby disrupting hormone secretions and weakening the body's immune system.

Excessive and improperly shielded lighting burdens society with the economic and environmental costs of wasted energy. The Council further finds that good outdoor lighting at night benefits everyone as it increases safety due to reduced glare, promotes good health of our environment and citizenry, and preserves the ability to view the stars against a dark night sky.

Therefore the Council finds that it is in the best interests of the residents of the city to require owners and operators of exterior lights to prevent nighttime glare and light trespass from excessive lights and high powered light fixtures.

Section 1. Article 17 of subchapter 7 of chapter 1 of title 27 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 27-505.2 to read as follows:

§27-505.2 Requirement that existing exterior lighting has fully shielded light fixtures. a. For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. “Existing exterior light fixture” shall mean light generated from an existing indoor or outdoor source that provides illumination to a surface, building, structure, device, or other outdoor feature.

2. “Fully shielded” shall mean a fixture designed, constructed and installed in a fixed position in such a manner that all light emitted is projected below the horizontal plane through the fixture’s lowest light emitting part.

3. “Lighting” shall mean equipment and effects of lighting produced by artificial means.

4. “Lumens” shall mean the unit of measurement used to quantify the amount of light produced by a light bulb or emitted from a fixture.

b. Existing exterior light fixtures shall minimize glare and light trespass to the greatest extent possible.

Unless otherwise provided for in this section, all existing exterior light fixtures that are rated to emit 1800 lumens or greater shall be maintained as fully shielded light fixtures so as to avoid illuminating areas not intended to be illuminated by such fixture.

c. Where such light fixture cannot be shielded as required by this section, such light fixtures shall be replaced at the end of its useful life. Its useful life shall be determined in accordance with any schedule for the amortization of the cost of such light fixture set forth in the internal revenue code or regulations or state law, whichever would provide for earlier replacement.

d. This section shall not apply to the following:

1. Residential type fixtures that are UL-rated to be lamped at wattages not to exceed 60 watts with lamps rated no greater than 900 lumens.

2. Low light output “landscape lighting” if the lighting was not set up to operate continuously from dusk to dawn.

e. Any person who receives notice from the department of a violation has ninety days to cure such violation.

f. Any person who fails to correct the violation within ninety days after such notice shall be liable for a civil penalty of not less than two hundred dollars nor more than one thousand dollars for each day that such violation exists.

§2. This local law shall take effect ninety days after enactment, except that the commissioner of buildings shall take such measures, including the promulgation of rules, as are necessary for its implementation prior to such effective date.

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