

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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# W11b

**Prepared January 22, 2026 for the February 4, 2026 Hearing**

**TO:** Coastal Commissioners and Interested Persons

**FROM:** Shana Gray, Deputy Director, North Coast District and Statewide Planning  
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**SUBJECT: Humboldt County LCP Amendment No. LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1  
(Outdoor Lighting Regulations)**

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## SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Commission staff recommends that the Commission **approve** proposed Humboldt County LCP Amendment No. LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 as submitted.

Humboldt County (County) is proposing to amend the County's certified Implementation Plan (IP) to specify outdoor lighting standards aimed at preserving dark skies and reducing light pollution and light trespass. The proposed IP amendment establishes regulations for outdoor lighting that provides clear benefits for both complaint-based enforcement and coastal resource protection. The proposed outdoor lighting amendment was developed using the principles and best practices promoted by DarkSky International, an organization dedicated to reducing light pollution and preserving natural night environments. These standards emphasize usefulness (use light only if/when it's needed), targeting light (e.g., shielded, downward-directed lighting), low level (using the lowest level of illumination required), controlling light (e.g., use of timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed), and using warm color temperatures.

The proposed regulations include general requirements that outdoor lighting for residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses be used only when necessary (i.e., be illuminated only when the area is actively being used or to address safety needs), confined to the area of the property engaged in a permitted activity, be fully shielded to preclude light glow above the fixture, and be directed downward and not toward neighboring properties, public rights-of-way, environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA), or the sky. The proposed amendment sets defined limits for brightness of outdoor lighting for residential uses and for agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses. Residential lighting is capped at 1100 lumens; agricultural, commercial, and

## LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 (Outdoor Lighting Regulations)

industrial lighting at 3200 lumens, with additional foot-candle, height, and, in the case of parking lots, color temperature restrictions. Athletic field lighting will require a Conditional Use Permit. The proposed amendment also addresses prohibited lighting types (e.g., aerial lasers, searchlights, mercury vapor lights, flashing lights, and low-pressure sodium fixtures) and specifies lighting exemptions (e.g., temporary holiday decorations, flag illumination with narrow beams, string lights with a color temperature of 2700 Kelvins or less that are turned off by 10 p.m., emergency lighting, and motion detector lighting fixtures with time limits). Exempt lighting is expressly prohibited from trespassing onto neighboring properties, the night sky, or ESHA. All new or modified projects must submit a lighting plan for conformance review with the proposed regulations.

With the requirements related to brightness limitations, use of targeted, controlled lighting, and various other standards aligned with DarkSky International's principles, the proposed amendment conforms with and is adequate to carry out the ESHA and visual resources protection policies of the County's six certified Land Use Plans. The proposed amendment was informed by the availability of lighting technologies and supplies in local retail outlets around the County to inform the standards and limits on brightness and color temperature limits. While the intent was to align as closely as possible with DarkSky International's recommendations, the County ultimately determined that a certain level of flexibility was necessary to accommodate practical considerations, such as the availability of compliant fixtures in the local retail market and the lighting needs of agricultural, residential, and commercial uses in a rural setting.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission find that the County's proposed amendments to the Implementation Plan, as submitted, conform with and are adequate to carry out the provisions of the certified Land Use Plan and approve LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 **as submitted**. The motion to accomplish this recommendation is found on **Page 4** of this staff report.

### **DEADLINE FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

The County transmitted LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 to the Commission on November 14, 2025, and the LCP amendment submittal was filed as complete by the North Coast District Office on that date. The 60-working-day time limit for Commission action on the proposed IP amendment is February 13, 2026. If the Commission fails to take final action on this amendment at this February Commission meeting (e.g., if the Commission instead chooses to continue the item), then staff recommends that as part of such non-final action the Commission extend the deadline for final Commission action on the proposed amendment by one year. To do so, staff recommend a YES vote on the alternate motion below. Passage of the motion will result in a new deadline for final Commission action on the proposed LCP amendment. The motion passes only by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

*Alternate Time Extension Motion: I move that the Commission extend the time limit to act on County of Humboldt Local Coastal Program Amendment Number LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 to February 13, 2027, and I recommend a yes vote.*

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For further information, please contact Cade McNamara at the Commission's North Coast District Office in Arcata at [cade.mcnamara@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:cade.mcnamara@coastal.ca.gov). If you wish to provide written comments, please do so via regular mail (directed to the North Coast District Office) or email (by emailing [NorthCoast@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:NorthCoast@coastal.ca.gov)). Commission staff will distribute to the Commissioners any copies of written materials received from interested parties by 5:00 pm on the Friday before the scheduled Commission meeting.

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**EXHIBITS**

[Exhibit 1 – Maps of six LUP plan areas](#)

[Exhibit 2 – Resolution of Transmittal](#)

[Exhibit 3 – Adopted Ordinance with Proposed LCP Amendment Text](#)

## I. Motion and Resolution

Staff recommends that the Commission, after public hearing, approve the IP amendment as submitted. To accomplish this motion, staff recommend a **NO** vote on the foregoing motion. Failure of this motion will result in certification of the Implementation Plan amendment as submitted and the adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

### Motion:

I move that the Commission **reject** Implementation Plan Amendment No. LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 as submitted by Humboldt County.

### Resolution to certify the implementation plan amendment as submitted:

The Commission hereby **certifies** the Humboldt County Implementation Plan Amendment LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 as submitted and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the Implementation Plan amendment conforms with, and is adequate to carry out, the provisions of the certified Land Use Plan. Certification of the Implementation Plan amendment will meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the Implementation Plan amendment on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible alternatives and mitigation measures that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts on the environment.

## II. Procedural Issues

### A. Public Participation

Section 30503 of the Coastal Act requires public input in preparation, approval, certification, and amendment of any LCP. Humboldt County's Planning Commission held an Outdoor Lighting Ordinance workshop on March 20, 2025, and held a public hearing on the proposed amendment on May 15, 2025. Humboldt County Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on August 19, 2025, and June 13, 2023. The hearings were noticed to the public consistent with sections 13551 and 13552 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. Notice of the subject amendment has been distributed to all known interested parties.

### B. Procedural Requirements

Pursuant to section 13544(b)(2) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, if the Commission certifies the LCP amendment as submitted, no further County action will be necessary for the LCP amendment to take effect. Should the Commission certify the

LCP amendment subject to modifications, final approval by the County and a determination by the Executive Director of compliance with section 13544 of the Commission's regulations will be required for the amendment to take effect. Should the Commission deny the LCP amendment as submitted without suggested modifications, no further action is required by either the Commission or the County, and the proposed LCP amendment will not become effective.

### **III. Findings for Approval of IP Amendment As Submitted**

The following findings support the Commission's approval of the proposed Implementation Plan Amendment as submitted. The Commission hereby finds and declares as follows:

#### **A. Amendment Description**

Humboldt County is proposing LCP Amendment (LCPA) Application No. LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 to specify outdoor lighting standards aimed at preserving dark skies and reducing light pollution and trespass throughout the unincorporated areas of the County's Coastal Zone. The Implementation Plan (IP) amendment adds section 313-105.1 to the certified IP (Title III, Division 1, Chapter 3) setting design standards for outdoor lighting for residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and other uses and amends related IP sections on Definitions (sec. 313-138, -141, & -154).

The proposed regulations include general requirements that outdoor lighting to be used only when necessary (i.e., be illuminated only when the area is actively being used or to address safety needs), confined to the area of the property engaged in a permitted activity, be fully shielded to preclude light glow above the fixture, and be directed downward and not toward neighboring properties, public rights-of-way, environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA), or the sky.

The regulations also limit brightness of light allowed and in some cases color of light. The amendment articulates definitions for both lumens and foot-candles. A lumen is the standard unit that measures the amount of visible light emitted by a lighting source and is often quantified using foot-candles. A foot-candle is a unit of illuminance that is defined as one lumen per square-foot.

**Foot-candle:** "Foot-candle" (abbreviated Tc') means a unit of illuminance defined as one lumen per square foot.

**Lumen:** A standard unit that measures the amount of visible light emitted by a light source.

Correlated color temperature (CCT) is related to lights color or warmth and is measured in Kelvins (K), with yellowish lights being a lower number of Kelvin and bluish lights being a higher number of Kelvin. The amendment requires lower levels of Kelvin specifically for parking lots and string lights.

**Correlated color temperature:** Correlated color temperature (abbreviated \*CCT') in lighting refers to the warmth or coolness of a light source, measured in Kelvin (K), where lower numbers indicate warmer, yellowish light and higher numbers indicate cooler, bluer light.

The proposed amendment sets limits for brightness of outdoor lighting for residential uses and for agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses. Residential lighting is capped at 1100 lumens; agricultural, commercial, and industrial lighting at 3200 lumens, with additional foot-candle, height, and, in the case of parking lots, color temperature restrictions. All athletic field lighting would be subject to a Conditional Use Permit.

LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 also introduces and defines prohibited lighting types, which include aerial lasers, searchlights, mercury vapor lights, flashing lights, and low-pressure sodium fixtures, and any lighting that creates distraction to the traveling public. There are also specified lighting exemptions for temporary holiday decorations, flag illumination with narrow beams (subject to Federal and State flag code), string lights with a CCT of 2700K or less and provided they are turned off by 10 p.m., emergency lighting, and motion detector lighting fixtures with time limits (no more than 5 minutes from trigger and cannot be triggered from outside property lines). Exempt lighting must not trespass onto neighboring properties, the night sky, or ESHA (or it's otherwise not able to qualify as exempt).

All new or modified projects must submit a lighting plan for conformance review with the proposed regulations showing fixture locations on a site plan, shielding, light dispersion (shown in foot-candles and CCT as applicable), and coordination with any associated landscaping.

Finally, the proposed regulations address “pre-existing lighting” (fixtures installed prior to adoption of the proposed regulations and consistent with the zoning regulations at the time of installation). Such lighting may remain so long as no complaints for a lighting nuisance are received and there is no substantial change or expansion of use on the property after the effective date of the proposed regulations.

The County’s adopted ordinance with proposed LCP Amendment text is included as [Exhibit 3](#).

## **B. Environmental Setting / Standard of Review**

Pursuant to Coastal Act section 30513, to certify the proposed amendment to the IP portion of the County of Humboldt LCP, the Commission must find that the IP as amended would be in conformity with and adequate to carry out the policies of the certified Land Use Plan (LUP). Humboldt County has six certified LUP Area Plans, each certified by the Commission in the early 1980’s – North Coast Area Plan, Trinidad Area Plan, McKinleyville Area Plan, Humboldt Bay Area Plan, Eel River Area Plan, and South Coast Area Plan. The IP as amended must be in conformity with and adequate to carry out the policies of each. Maps of the six LUP planning areas are included as [Exhibit 1](#), and each of the LUPs is described briefly below.

### North Coast Area Plan (NCAP)

The NCAP plan area extends from the northern County line approximately 23 miles south to Patricks Point and up to two miles inland. The area also includes nine miles of coastal lagoons (Freshwater Lagoon, Stone Lagoon, and Big Lagoon) and regionally unique wetland habitats (Big Lagoon Bog). Redwood National Park and several State and County parks are within and adjacent to the area. There are two areas of deferred certification (ADCs) within the North Coast area – Big Lagoon Shoreline Lots and Stagecoach Hill. The Big Lagoon Shoreline Lots ADC includes about 30 acres and 34 assessor's parcels west of Ocean View Drive and Roundhouse Creek Road, south of Big Lagoon. The Stagecoach Hill ADC includes about 685 acres and 31 assessor's parcels east of Big Lagoon and Highway 101. The Commission is responsible for the review and processing of coastal development permits in the ADCs; the certified LCP may be used as guidance.

### Trinidad Area Plan (TAP)

The TAP plan area extends along approximately six miles of coastline from Sue-meg State Park to Little River State Beach and includes rural lands around the City of Trinidad and the unincorporated community of Westhaven. Several state and County beaches and parks in the TAP area are popular visitor destination points. Most developed properties in the area are on individual wells and onsite wastewater treatment systems, though some water service is provided to certain areas (e.g., portions of Westhaven) by the City of Trinidad or small community services districts reliant on water supply extracted from perennial creeks and streams. There is one area of deferred certification (ADC) within the Trinidad Area Plan planning area – Trinidad Area Shoreline Lots ADC. The ADC includes about 534 acres and 133 assessor's parcels consisting of (a) five shoreline parcels south of the City of Trinidad along the 6th Avenue Trail in Westhaven and (b) all of those privately owned lots, other than those owned by the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, west of Scenic Drive and Patrick's Point Drive (where these two roads are the first public roads nearest the sea) and north of the City of Trinidad to Patricks Point.

### McKinleyville Area Plan (MAP)

The MAP plan area includes a five-mile-long stretch of coastal lands from the Little River to the Mad River and up to four miles inland (around the Mad River). The unincorporated community of McKinleyville is located partially within the coastal zone atop an uplifted marine terrace separated from the ocean by a series of coastal dunes and bluffs. Much of the MAP area has urban services (water and sewer) and has largely been built out.

### Humboldt Bay Area Plan (HBAP)

The HBAP plan area includes approximately 20 miles of coastline extending from the Mad River to the north end of Table Bluff, plus over 100 additional miles of estuarine shoreline along Humboldt Bay and its tidally influenced tributaries. The HBAP area includes the north and south spits of Humboldt Bay, the farmed bottomlands around Arcata and Eureka, and various unincorporated urban areas (e.g., Samoa, Manila, Myrtle town, King Salmon, Fields Landing, and Humboldt Hill). Much of the HBAP area is

served with urban services (sewer and/or water), and the LUP boundaries about the cities of Eureka and Arcata. The Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District manages the Port of Humboldt Bay.

#### Eel River Area Plan (ERAP)

The ERAP plan area includes lands that extend from Table Bluff, which lies just south of Humboldt Bay, approximately 11.5 miles southward to the rural ranchlands around and southwest of the cities of Ferndale and Fortuna. The ERAP area is mostly rural, except for the unincorporated community of Loleta (population approximately 780) north of the Eel River, which has community wastewater and water services. The ERAP area includes the entire Eel River Delta that extends inland over 10 miles to the confluence of the Van Duzen River with the main-stem Eel River.

#### South Coast Area Plan (SCAP)

The SCAP plan area is the largest geographically of the County's six LUPs, extending over 45 miles from the rural ranches around Guthrie Creek (southwest of Ferndale) to the southern County line. The federally owned and managed King Range National Conservation Area bisects the planning area into two sections – the “north” SCAP area, including the coastal lands that extend from Guthrie Creek south to the Mattole River estuary, and the Shelter Cove area near the south end of the King Range. The SCAP area is completely rural except for Shelter Cove, which includes a ~2,640-acre, 4,700-lot residential subdivision (partially developed) served by Resort Improvement District #1 with community sewer, water, fire protection, and other services.

### **C. Affected Lands**

The LCP amendment and the proposed General Regulations, Prohibited Lighting, and Exemptions of the ordinance are applicable county-wide and apply to all land use designations and zones. There are specifications for residential use that apply to all residential land use designations and zoning and specifications for agricultural, commercial and industrial uses that apply to those specific land use designations and zones. The regulations vary slightly depending on the applicable use and zone of a proposed lighting source. The proposed regulations do not address street lighting, which is planned to be regulated under a separate ordinance being prepared by the County Department of Public Works.

### **D. Consistency Analysis**

The primary Coastal Act considerations for outdoor lighting regulations relate to the potential direct and indirect impacts of artificial light on the natural environment and wildlife, including environmentally sensitive habitat areas, species of concern, and migratory birds. Lighting can also interfere with coastal access and recreational experiences, particularly in areas where visitors seek to enjoy dark skies and natural settings. Variations in lighting can affect neighborhood aesthetics, public views, and can alter community character, sometimes creating a nuisance or hazard depending on the light color and intensity.

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As mentioned previously, Humboldt County has six certified LUPs as part of the overall LCP. Each of these six LUPs have the following provisions of the Coastal Act embedded to strengthen protections for both natural resources (30240) and coastal scenic areas (30251).

### § 30240:

(a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas.

(b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

### § 30251, in applicable part:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas...

In addition to the above Coastal Act policies, policies on exterior lighting are included in four of the six LUPs: the Humboldt Bay Area Plan, the McKinleyville Area Plan, the North Coast Area Plan, and the Trinidad Area Plan. Each mentions exterior lighting in the context of the Coastal Scenic Areas provisions of these LCPs as follows: "Exterior lighting shall be shielded so that it is not directed beyond the boundaries of the property".

The proposed outdoor lighting amendment was developed using the principles and best practices promoted by DarkSky International, an organization dedicated to reducing light pollution and preserving natural night environments.<sup>1</sup> These standards emphasize usefulness (use light only if/when it's needed), targeting light (e.g., shielded, downward-directed lighting), low level (using the lowest level of illumination required), controlling light (e.g., use of timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed), and using warm color temperatures [limiting the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed, since higher-value K bluer lights are more disruptive for wildlife, such as migrating birds]. Elements of each principle are included in the required standards for outdoor lighting in the proposed regulations as submitted. For example:

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<sup>1</sup> See website: <https://darksky.org/>.

- Section 105.1.2.1 limits the area to be illuminated for all types of uses only to the area of the property engaged in a permitted activity;
- Section 105.1.2.2 requires outdoor lighting fixtures for all types of uses to be fully shielded, directed downward, and not directed toward neighboring properties, the public right-of-way, ESHA, or the sky; Section 105.1.4.2 allows flag illumination only in compliance with the flag code and requires use of “very narrow beam of light” only;
- Sections 105.1.5 and 1.6 limit maximum illumination to (respectively) 1100 lumens for residential uses and 3200 lumens for agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses;
- Section 105.1.2.1 requires all outdoor lighting (for all uses) to be illuminated only when actively being used or to address safety needs; Section 105.1.4.5 regulates motion detector lighting fixtures to ensure the lights turn off after 5 minutes and cannot be triggered from outside the subject property
- Sections 105.1.4.3 and 105.1.6.3 limit bulb CCTs to 2700 K or less for (respectively) string lights and parking lot lighting.

Thus, the regulations require minimization of light trespass by illuminating areas only when in active use, by limiting illuminating only the area permitted for use, and by requiring that light be fully shielded, directed downward, and restricted to the subject property. There also is an express requirement that all lighting not be directed towards neighboring properties, the public right of way, ESHA, or the night sky. The regulations include definitions for lighting nuisance, light trespass, and light pollution. This clarity and specificity not only helps planners and the public understand the regulations, but also facilitates code enforcement and the resolution of noncompliance situations.

**Lighting nuisance:** Lighting nuisance refers to light pollution that significantly impacts or interferes with a person's enjoyment of their property or their health. It can be caused by misdirected or excessive lighting, or light trespass from neighboring properties. A lighting nuisance must be a continual event. A one-time offensive activity is not sufficient to be deemed a lighting nuisance.

**Light pollution:** Light pollution means any artificial light emitted into the atmosphere, either directly or indirectly, which may have a disruptive effect on natural cycles and inhibits the observation of stars and planets.

**Light trespass:** Light trespass means any artificial light emitted by a lighting installation which shines beyond the boundaries of the property on which the installation is sited. Included, but not limited to, any light from a light fixture onto neighboring property that interferes with viewing of the night sky or eliminates the ability to have darkness on the adjacent property, or shines into or onto neighboring windows, properties or structures.

During the process of drafting the proposed regulations, the County researched currently available lighting technologies and supplies available in local retail outlets to inform the standards and limits on brightness and color temperature. While the intent was to align as closely as possible with DarkSky recommendations, the County ultimately determined that a certain level of flexibility was necessary to accommodate practical considerations, such as the availability of compliant fixtures in the local retail market and the lighting needs of agricultural, residential, and commercial uses in a rural setting. As such, lumen limits and color temperature requirements were adjusted slightly to ensure that residential owners/tenants and operators of agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses could reasonably obtain fixtures and bulbs that meet safety and operational needs without compromising resource protection goals. Largely, DarkSky International recommends a maximum CCT for color tunable or field-selectable CCT products as 3000 K.<sup>2</sup> The County proposed a value slightly lower than this (2700 K) for exempt string lights (as that type of light source is not required to be fully shielded; such lights also must be turned off by 10 p.m.) and also for parking lots, which typically include an abundance of lights over a relatively large area that may be left on all night. As all other outdoor lighting sources (for all residential, agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses) must be fully shielded (no translucent fixtures allowed) and directed downwards to prevent light trespass, the regulations do not specify CCT limits for these uses.

While CCT limits have been set slightly lower than DarkSky International recommendations, the proposed regulations set slightly higher limits for lumen requirements. As submitted, the regulations cap lumen limits for residential uses at 1100 lumens (DarkSky International generally recommends 1000 lumens, though this limit varies based on property size and for multi-family uses). Consideration was given to capping the lumen limit at 1000 lumens, but the County ultimately adopted and is proposing a slightly higher limit due to local availability of light bulbs at retail stores in the area that range up to 1100 lumens. The slight variability allows users to maintain use of what is locally available by Humboldt County retailers while also maintaining the requirement that lighting be fully shielded and other requirements previously mentioned. Similarly, commercial, industrial, and agricultural (not including lighting for commercial cannabis cultivation, which is subject to a different section of previously certified IP regulations – section 313-55), uses may not exceed 3200 lumens. While consideration was given to a maximum limit of 3000 lumens consistent with DarkSky International recommendations, the County ultimately adopted and is proposing a maximum brightness level of 3200 lumens, since that bulb type is more widely available by local retailers. Lumen maximums, which are measured in foot-candles (one lumen per square foot), are measurable and therefore enforceable. If lighting creates a nuisance as

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<sup>2</sup> According to DarkSky International, because blue light is more apt to scatter locally in the atmosphere, it is prone to being redirected back toward earth as a physical manifestation of sky glow. This veil of sky glow reduces the visibility of stars within the natural nighttime sky, and the increased illumination may disrupt biological and ecological health.

defined in the proposed regulations, then it is subject to requirements for removal or replacement.

Pre-existing lighting or previously approved lighting that was consistent with County regulations prior to the adoption and certification of the subject regulations will be considered compliant so long as the County does not receive a complaint about the source as a lighting nuisance and the use or design of the light has not substantially changed over time. If the lighting source has been determined to be a nuisance, it may be subject to correction or redesign at the discretion of the Planning Director. Corrective actions could include requirements for shielding, filtering, redirecting, replacement of the fixture or source, removal, or a combination of the mentions to eliminate the lighting trespass, pollution, or nuisance.

As previously described, exempt lighting may only be considered exempt so long as it results in no light trespass to neighboring properties, the night sky, or ESHA. This includes temporary holiday decorations, fixtures that illuminate flags (subject to Federal and State flag codes), string lights that have warmer color temperatures only and are turned off by 10 p.m., emergency lighting, and motion detected lighting sources that have an activation limit of 5 minutes or less and that cannot be triggered from outside the property boundary. With the various limitations specified for meeting the exemption criteria, these exemptions will not have a significant adverse impact on ESHA or visual resources inconsistent with the certified LUPs (also, as previously noted, these light sources are expressly prohibited from impacting the night sky or adjacent ESHA).

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the proposed amendment as submitted will help preserve dark skies, reduce light pollution and light trespass, and protect coastal resources while maintaining nighttime safety and functionality. Key provisions include shielding and downward-directed lighting, lumen and color temperature limits, prohibitions on high-impact lighting types, exemptions for low-impact uses, and requirements for lighting plans with new or modified development. The proposed LCPA aims to protect ESHA and wildlife, maintain scenic and visual qualities, and achieve DarkSky International principles as slightly adapted for feasibility, available market options, and Humboldt County's rural setting. Overall, the proposed IP amendment as submitted conforms with and is adequate to carry out the County's six certified land use plans.

## **IV. California Environmental Quality Act**

As set forth in section 21080.9 of the California Public Resources Code, CEQA exempts local government from the requirement of preparing an environmental impact report (EIR) in connection with its activities and approvals necessary for the preparation and adoption of an LCP. Instead, the CEQA responsibilities are assigned to the Coastal Commission, and the Commission's LCP review and approval program has been found by the Resources Agency to be the functional equivalent of the environmental review required by CEQA, pursuant to CEQA Section 21080.5. Therefore, the Commission is relieved of the responsibility to prepare an EIR for each LCP.

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Nevertheless, the Commission is required in approving an LCP amendment to find that approval of the proposed LCP as amended, does conform with CEQA provisions, including the requirement in CEQA Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) that the amended LCP will not be approved or adopted as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment [14 CCR §§13542(a), 13540(f), and 13555(b)].

The County's LCP amendment consists of an IP amendment. The Commission incorporates its findings on Coastal Act and LUP conformity into this CEQA finding as if set forth in full herein. As discussed throughout the staff report and hereby incorporated by reference, the IP amendment conforms with and is adequate to carry out the policies of the certified LUP. The Commission finds that approval of the IP amendment will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts within the meaning of CEQA. Therefore, the Commission finds that there are no other feasible alternatives or mitigation measures which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact, either individual or cumulatively, which the activity may have on the environment [14 CCR §§ 13542(a), 13540(f), and 13555(b)].

**V. APPENDIX A – Substantive File Documents**

LCP Amendment Application No. LCP-1-HUM-25-0060-1 and associated file documents.

DarkSky International: <https://darksky.org/>

Humboldt County Certified Local Coastal Program.