



CITY COUNCIL ACTION REPORT

March 24, 2008

TO: Phillip L. Nelson, City Manager

FROM: Brian Murphy, Assistant City Manager/Economic Development Services
Steven J. Vandette, P.E., City Engineer

SUBJECT: Support of Project Safe Passage – Detroit Audubon Society

Background:

- Many small birds, such as warblers, wrens, vireos, thrushes and tanagers migrate at night while on their way to their summer breeding grounds or their wintering grounds. They face many hazards in both directions and tall lighted buildings have been shown to be one of the most dangerous. Each year millions of birds die during night migrations by striking tall buildings.
- It is thought that the lights on tall buildings confuse the navigation systems of birds unlucky to have such buildings in their flight path. They circle the buildings repeatedly and either die of exhaustion or by colliding with the illuminated building. According to scientists at the Field Museum in Chicago, this mortality could be reduced by 80% if those lights were off.
- The Detroit Audubon Society is requesting building organizations, government agencies and property owners to turn off lights in tall buildings from 11:00pm to dawn from the second weekend in March through May and from the second weekend in August through October.
- By turning out lights, many birds are saved and energy costs are reduced. It is a win-win situation for building owners/operators and for the birds that will be able to continue their long migration flights with one major hazard removed.
- Since 2006, Governor Granholm has proclaimed March 15 through May 31 and August 15 through October 31 as Safe Passage Great Lakes Days.

Financial Considerations:

- Turning off lights saves money and energy.

Legal Considerations:

- There are no legal considerations.

Policy Considerations:

- This endeavor supports Goal I: Enhance the livability and safety of the community.

Options:

- City staff recommends the support of Project Safe Passage, by adopting a resolution and by encouraging high-rise building owners and employees to turn off lights at night from the second weekend in March through May, and from the second weekend in August through October.

STATE OF MICHIGAN



Executive
Office

Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor

CERTIFICATE OF PROCLAMATION

On behalf of the citizens of Michigan, I, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, do hereby proclaim March 15 through May 31, 2006, and August 15 through October 31, 2006, as

Safe Passage Great Lakes Days

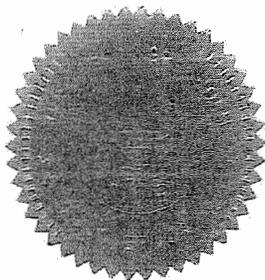
Whereas, Radar studies show that birds migrate in a broad front across the Great Lakes at night, and millions of birds use the skies over Michigan during their spring migration; and,

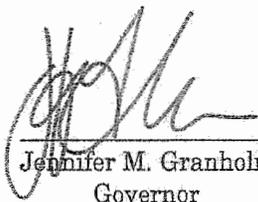
Whereas, Over 250 species, including warblers, thrushes, and tanagers, some declining steeply in numbers, fly over Michigan during their migration; and,

Whereas, The lights of tall buildings often confuse the navigation systems of birds flying nearby, and birds can die from exhaustion or by colliding with buildings; and,

Whereas, By turning lights off at night, we would save money, reduce pollution, save energy, and save the lives of many of the birds that fly over our skies at night; and now therefore be it,

Resolved, That I, Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor of the State of Michigan, do hereby proclaim March 15 through May 31, 2006, and August 15 through October 31, 2006, as Safe Passage Great Lakes Days in Michigan.




Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor



DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY SINCE 1939
6,000+ MEMBERS
IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN



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▼ PROJECT SAFE PASSAGE

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Project Safe Passage Update

The Detroit Audubon and Michigan Audubon Societies are teaming up in a concerted effort to implement Project Safe Passage Great Lakes throughout the entire state. Representatives of both organizations met at the Howell Nature Center this spring and agreed to develop training and educational/promotional materials for distribution to the MAS regional chapters at the MAS Regional meeting in the fall. Regional chapters will be requested to lead the campaigns in their chapter areas. Another meeting is scheduled to continue the planning this summer.

Safe Passage is envisioned as a project that will become an ongoing part of the culture and a way of doing business that enhances the survival of migrating birds, contributes to a reduction of greenhouse gases and reduces the cost of energy for participants. We welcome the Michigan Audubon Society and look forward to a successful partnership in this venture on behalf of our shared environment.

With the end of the spring migration, we are pleased to review the progress that was made on Safe Passage and to consider the challenges and opportunities that we face in the future.

Rochelle Breitenbach and Richard Quick and DAS member and supporter Jon Walton met with 6 to 8 members of the Building Owner's Management Association (BOMA). Both owners and managers in attendance were receptive to the plan. We hope to have further discussions regarding the issue of clear glass, which also poses a hazard to birds on a daily basis.

Governor Granholm's proclamation, designating March 15 to May 31 and August 15 to October 31 as Safe Passage Great Lakes days, was reissued for 2007.





The City of Southfield issued a resolution of support for Project Safe Passage, encouraging business owners, building owners and property owners to cooperate with the program.



State Rep. Lisa Wojno of Warren introduced House Res. 89, a resolution in support of the program. HR89 is in the Great Lakes and Environment Committee, chaired by Rep. Rebekah Warren. We are hoping for Senate sponsorship, but have not yet received confirmation from Sen. Olshove.



During a night drive through downtown Detroit in early June, I was encouraged by the number of buildings that were dark above the lower stories, but display lights on some of the roofs are still a problem that needs to be addressed.



By the time you receive this, the fall migration will be in progress. While we have achieved a measure of success in our efforts, much remains to be done. According to *Winging It* (the newsletter of the American Birding Association), Jonathan White Jr. of the American Museum of Natural History, after studying specimens brought to the museum over several years, has concluded that many more dead birds were found during autumn than during spring migration. We need to keep this in mind as we move forward to educate and motivate our membership and the public to get involved in making the changes needed to stop the needless loss of so many migrating species.



Although the success of the 'lights out' aspect of Safe Passage will mark a significant milestone on the road to the larger task before us, major hazards such as communication towers, windmills and clear glass in our homes and office buildings will need to be addressed, as Dr. Klem and Dr. Gehring have demonstrated with their pioneering research efforts.



The loss of habitat will continue to be a leading cause of the alarming decline in avian populations. Feral and domestic 'outdoor' cats account for as many avian fatalities as the other threats. We need the support of our membership to help monitor compliance and motivate their friends and colleagues to participate in making our environment safe for future generations of our fellow creatures as well as our own species. Please consider volunteering in this effort.

**Nature
Mail**
[Click Here](#)

[Safe Passage By Joe Bartell](#)

[Sierra Club Endorsement](#)

[Proclamation of support from Governor Grandholm](#)

[Appeal to building owners](#)

Project Safe Passage Flyer--What You Can Do

Birmingham Eccentric article 3-18-07

Help by sending a letter to the FCC

PROJECT SAFE PASSAGE

Project Safe Passage Great Lakes is off to a good start. Our goal for the project is to persuade the operators of tall buildings to turn off the lights between 11:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. during the spring and fall migration periods. To this end, we have approached individual building managers, city and county elected officials, corporate officers and associations. In the brief period since we started, a number of successes have encouraged us.

Governor Granholm has issued a proclamation designating the periods of March 15 through May 31 and August 15 through October 31 as Safe Passage Great Lakes Days.

Safe Passage Great Lakes Honor Roll

The following buildings have agreed to implement Project Safe Passage Great Lakes by turning out their lights between the hours of 11:00 P.M. and Dawn during the fall and spring migration periods. It should be noted that certain lights may not be turned off due to circumstances beyond the control of the operators, such as code requirements or tenant rights.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan

Brewery Park

Buhl Building

**Building Owners and Managers Association of
Metropolitan Detroit (BOMA)**

City of Mt. Clemens

City of Southfield

Chrysler World Headquarters and Technology Center

Coleman A. Young Municipal Building

Detroit Opera Company

DTE Energy

Ford Motor Company

**Macomb County Board of Commissioners
State of Michigan Government Buildings**

If you live or work where you can monitor compliance or can contact your building management or draw your own blinds at night, please contact the DAS office by phone (248) 354-4960, by mail (26080 Berg Rd. Southfield, MI 48033), or by e-mail (detas@bignet.net) and leave your contact information. We'll be in touch.

Links with more information:

[FLAP--Fatal Light Awareness Program](#)

[National Public Radio--Windows: A Clear Danger to Birds](#)

[National Audubon--Minimizing Window Collisions](#)

[National Audubon--Clear and Present Danger](#)

[National Audubon--Birds vs. Windows](#)

[Birds and Buildings--Information and Resources](#)

[Terrain.org--A Building Less Bright](#)

[CNN--Glass windows an 'indiscriminate' bird killer](#)



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