



Get a grip on **light pollution**

- another way to fight Climate Change

Government, industry, commerce and many householders express concern about climate change. So why are they allowing lights to destroy the night sky? We all know about rejecting fossil fuel energy, driving electric cars, turning down thermostats, not overfilling kettles...

You may not have considered that, alongside many other ways to save the planet, **controlling light pollution** can also combat climate change. How?

Light pollution is:

- **The most visible form of energy waste:** the glow that hangs over towns and cities; the glare from over-bright LED 'Rottweiler' lights on houses, car parks, warehouse walls; the veil of wasted light that hides the stars at night. Most outdoor LED lights are too bright and too white (blue-rich).
- **A threat to the natural environment** (stray light is a factor in biodiversity collapse) **and to human health** (too much blue light – LEDs again!). We can't continue to erode the darkness of the natural night.
- **The easiest form of energy waste to solve:** replace *over-bright* lamps that spray light everywhere with lamps that point where the light's needed, and are of the minimum brightness for their purpose.

"Don't knock LEDs. They're cheap, energy efficient, long-lasting... Haven't they solved the power consumption problem in lighting?" Well, no.

Technologies aimed at saving energy and money *always* result in more use. In the 20th century, the energy efficiency of street lighting increased by a factor of 20 but lighting intensity per mile increased 25 times. This trend continues. LEDs still consume power and they've proliferated enormously worldwide.

That aside, the main problem is **excessive energy demand**, particularly in cities. We should be weaning ourselves off the 24/7 lifestyle, not just because of reducing the need for lighting. Even today, 80% of energy use is from fossil fuels. This will take years to fix, whereas saving energy is effective and immediate. Do we really need lights past midnight in quiet residential streets?

The climate emergency requires urgent action. One quick and easy measure is to **control excessive lighting**. We need light at night, but only **when and where required**. Positive action on this will show that government is serious about tackling climate change.

Save the planet, cut energy waste: act on excessive lighting

Commission for Dark Skies

www.britastro.org/dark-skies