

**APPENDIX K
ANNUAL LIGHTING LETTER**



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Growth Management | Environmental Division

April 20, 2012

Dear Property Owner, Manager or Representative:

This letter is to remind all beach front property owners and those in close proximity to the beach, that marine turtle nesting season extends from **May 1 through October 31**. As you may or may not know all species of marine turtles are Federally Protected and Listed as either Threatened or Endangered. At the local level, on May 3rd 1999, County Ordinance 99-33 was enacted establishing a Beach Lighting Management Plan, which currently encompasses the entire 41.1 miles of Coastal St. Johns County, for the protection of nesting marine turtles and their hatchlings.

During the months of May through October, from sun down to sun up, no artificial lighting shall illuminate the beach, either through direct or non-direct reflected lighting. Studies have found that artificial lighting can deter nesting turtles from coming ashore to lay their eggs. In addition, dark skies are essential for emerging hatchlings. Sea turtle hatchlings are directed towards the water by the attraction of the natural lit moon. In the presence of brighter artificial light, these turtles can become disoriented and crawl away from the ocean and toward the artificial light. Consequentially, the prolonged, misdirected crawling often can result in death due to dehydration, predation or roadside traffic. A single light can result in the loss of as many as 100 hatchlings.

The recovery of sea turtles depends largely upon our efforts in managing the effects of expanding human populations. One of these effects is light pollution which, fortunately, may be among the most easily managed. Please be aware that **official citations are issued for repeat violations and the fine is \$108 for first offense and \$258 for repeat violations.**

St. Johns County is in its sixth year of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services 20 year Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The programs and policies implemented through the HCP/ITP allow the County to demonstrate its goal to protect its residents and the sensitive species we share our coastal environment with. Also included in your letter is a list of tips that can further our goals of sharing the beach. Please display in an obvious location in your home, condo, or entry way.

We would appreciate your cooperation in this matter. If you would like further technical information or other literature to place in your home or rental property regarding lighting you can log onto www.sjcfl.us/HCP/Light_Management.aspx or contact our office at 904.209.0323.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jessie Miller", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Jessie Miller
Beach Lighting Officer
904-209-0323
SJC Environmental, Habitat Conservation Section

cc: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services