

**APPENDIX M
PERSONAL LIGHTING LETTER**



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Growth Management | Environmental Division

April 7, 2012

Dear Property Owner, Manager or Representative:

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you on a personal note that marine turtle nesting season begins **May 1 and ends October 31**. As you may or may not know all species of marine turtles are Federally Protected and Listed as either Threatened or Endangered species. 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.

In 2006 St. Johns County entered into a 20 year agreement with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish programs and policies implemented through a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Incidental Take Permit (ITP). The purpose is to allow the County to achieve goals to protect the residents of St. Johns County and the sensitive species we share our coastal environment with. Additionally, in this agreement a Beach Lighting Management Plan was created as part of the protection measures for nesting marine turtles and their hatchlings. According to the plan which also encompasses County Ordinance 99-33 lights on your property have been identified as non-compliant. We have discussed these lights of concern and I look forward to your cooperation this season in getting those lights in compliance.

Please be aware that **official citations are issued for repeat violations and the fine is \$108 for first offense and \$258 for repeat violations.**

Included with this letter is a list of tips that can further our goals of sharing the beach. Please display in an obvious location for your guest to observe while visiting your resort. We truly do appreciate your cooperation in this matter. If you would like further technical information or other literature to place in rental properties regarding lighting you can log onto www.sjcfll.us/HCP/Light_Management.aspx or contact our office at 904.209.0323.

Sincerely,

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

cc: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services