SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP
of the Ventana Chapter
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Mayor, Vice-Mayor and City Council Members

City of Santa Cruz

October 16, 2026

Dear Mayor Keeley, Vice Mayor Kalantari-Johnson and City Council Members,

The Sierra Club and the Santa Cruz Bird Club would like to add our comments to those you have already received from other groups, agencies and individual community members regarding the new streetlights opposite and adjacent to the overwintering Monarch butterfly site in Lighthouse Field State Beach along Pelton Avenue.

We understand that the streetlights have been turned off currently and appreciate the City's quick response to the concerns about artificial light impacts on Monarch butterflies, bats, and bird species including nesting owls. We also understand that there are plans to shield the lights within a one- or two-month period. However, this time frame is within the Monarch overwintering period (mid-October to mid-March), which would not be a suitable time to evaluate shielding with the lights turned on.

Artificial light at night (ALAN) also impacts the Great Horned Owls that nest and fledge in the same eucalyptus grove. Their nesting time is January to March, with courtship beginning earlier and fledging from April to June. Artificial lighting can reduce nest site suitability and use and disrupt both hunting and breeding behavior.

Although downshielding is included in the City Objective Standards (24.12.185), due to the detrimental effects of artificial lighting on wildlife, the Sierra Club and the Santa Cruz Bird Club recommend that the City turn these lights off permanently. We are concerned that the decision to

install new streetlights in a previously dark sensitive habitat area did not fully consider the impacts of the new light source on the above noted species.

Fortunately, this is easily remedied by permanently turning off the lights.

We hope the city agrees with this recommendation. Please keep us advised on any decisions going forward.

Sincerely,

Mike Guth,

Chair, Santa Cruz Group of the Ventana Chapter, Sierra Club

Bob Mead,

President, Santa Cruz Bird Club

Cc: Nathan Nguyen, Director of Public Works