

# Action Alert!!!! CMP Chops Tower Informational Meeting

Woolwich Town Hall, 13 Nequasset Rd., Woolwich January 29, 6:00 PM



Chops tower lighting, reflected in the water, spoils the Merrymeeting Bay dark sky.

CMP's new 240' towers at the Chops Kennebec crossing dramatically violate the Merrymeeting Bay night sky viewshed with their excessive and as it turns out, unneeded lighting. An off the shelf "solution" to a problem that doesn't exist.

In recent decades, increasingly severe ecological, astronomical and aesthetic problems from night sky light pollution have spawned an international movement to restore and protect our dark skies. <https://www.darksky.org/>. Artificial lights disrupt major nocturnal ecosystems largely involving critical birds, bats and insects. Surface lights and internet satellite lighting and radiofrequencies are hampering worldwide astronomical observations. And plain old delight and wondrous awe from star gazing is becoming a thing of the past.

An aircraft detection lighting system able to activate tower lights only when an aircraft approaches within range is being considered as an alternative for the Chops and this could worsen things further. Using active and powerful radar, likely in the 12,000 watt range (smart meters and cell phones are 1-2 watts), these systems blanket the area with microwave radiofrequency radiation, often harmful to people and with evidence of adverse behavioral changes to birds, bats and other wildlife.

Radiofrequency radiation (RFR) was classified as a possible human carcinogen by the World Health Organization in 2011. The NIH National Toxicology Program in a 10 year 30 million dollar study recently found clear evidence (their most definitive category) of heart tumors from whole body exposure to RFR, some evidence (next category down) of brain and adrenal gland tumors and DNA damage in multiple organs. For a densely populated area, this is a particularly ludicrous idea.

There has been a misperception that structures over 200' above ground level (AGL) require lighting to deter aircraft. Our multiple legal analyses show this is wrong. According to federal regulation (14 CFR § 77.17 a. 2.), structures 200' or more within 3 miles of the center of an airport with runway at least 3,200' are obstructions to air navigation. Obstruction height thresholds increase 100' for each mile further from the airport up to 499' above which every structure is considered an obstacle.

Closest airport to the Chops is Wiscasset at 5 miles so adding 100' for each additional mile beyond 3 means the Chops towers need to be 400' AGL to be considered obstacles and subject to

FAA lighting and marking recommendations. Contrary to popular opinion, these towers, even unlit, are not obstructions to air navigation.

Harmful lights or radar are a set of false choices. Friends of Merrymeeting Bay adamantly opposes both.

Fortunately, the simplest and easiest solution, just turning the lights off, provides the most satisfactory outcome at the least cost and with the most rapid relief. We are requesting CMP extinguish the lights and issue a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) of unlit towers and wire crossing at these coordinates, at least pending resolution of a FAA Marking and Lighting Study which is probably required to back out of their current situation.

Unfortunately, because utilities receive a guaranteed rate of return (annualized 10-12%) on investment, CMP has an incentive rather than disincentive, for costly solutions. High costs of lighting and radar are recovered with interest, through rate hikes and paid by us all.

Save our night skies, save our health, save our wildlife, and save money. Please come to Wednesday's 6 pm informational meeting and just say no to CMP's false choices.