



**BY GINA G. SCALA**  
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The City of Lights could soon be re-dubbed the City of Darkness if a proposal to turn off power for six hours overnight comes to light.

Delphine Batho, the French minister for energy and environment, proposes lights in and outside of shops, offices and public buildings be turned off from 1-7 a.m. beginning in July, [according](#) to Bloomberg News.

The proposal would impact Paris as well as other French cities, towns and villages. Its goal is to save energy and money by showing “sobriety,” Batho said.

French merchants say the government’s latest move is damaging to France’s image as the world’s number one tourist destination. They are already hurting from an outlawed Sunday shopping and night shopping; the French economy is stall with little growth over the past year and unemployment at a 14-year high, Bloomberg News [reported](#) .

“Great! Another positive message sent to citizens and to tourists: the city will go dark!” said Sofy Mulle, vice-president of the France’s Commerce Council, which represents all of the country’s 650,000 merchants employing about 3.5 million people. “We are ready to make efforts, but the government is cutting a fine line between sobriety and austerity. Surely, we can work out

environmentally friendly solutions that have less impact on our society and our economy.”

After being knocked out by former President Nicolas Sarkozy, the proposal is now being pushed through by Socialist government, lead by President Francois Hollande, according to Bloomberg News.

“...lights from buildings and shops are part of public lights and it brings security,” Claude Boule, head of the City Centre Merchants association, said. “Even if there aren’t millions of people taking a stroll in the middle of the night, light still means security for those who are.”

It’s already lights out at the [Eiffel Tower](#) after 1 a.m. and the illumination at the Notre Dame Cathedral doesn’t burn as brightly now as in the past; being reduced to just 9,000 watts from 54,000 watts.

“One of our main objectives is to change the culture,” Batho said last month. “We need to end the cycle of producing more because we are consuming more. There should be sobriety in energy use.”