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[OutdoorGearLab.com](http://OutdoorGearLab.com)

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Mr. Jerry Stritzke  
CEO  
Recreational Equipment, Inc.  
6750 S. 228th St.  
Kent, Washington 98032

Dear Mr. Stritzke,

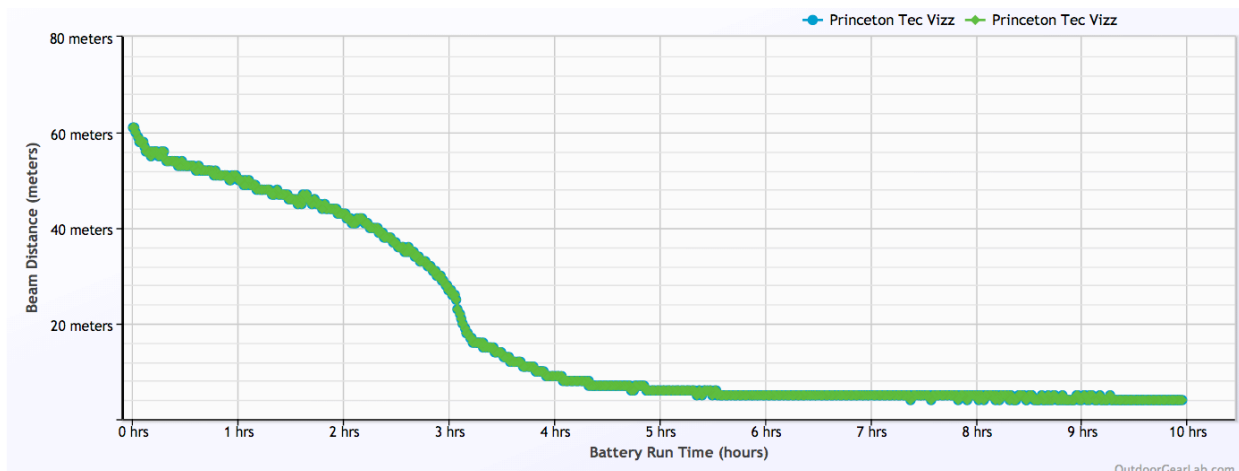
I am writing you to advocate on behalf of your members, of which I am one, to help address *deceptive headlamp marketing claims* which REI has publically endorsed.

I am co-founder of the outdoor gear review website, [OutdoorGearLab.com](http://OutdoorGearLab.com).

We recently concluded 6-months of testing of headlamps as part of our review:  
<http://www.outdoorgearlab.com/Headlamp-Reviews>

We performed extensive tests on 37 of the most popular and highly regarded headlamps in the industry.

As part of these tests, we looked at the marketing claims of headlamps, and concluded that the battery run-time claims printed on these packages are misleading to consumers. We were appalled to find that headlamps REI sells have unrealistic claims of battery run-time. For example, the Princeton Tec Vizz has a *claimed* battery run-time of 110 hours, yet our measurements show the *actual run-time* at 3.2 hours. We believe your headlamp vendors are *gaming the specs* by designing lights that produce a long tail of very dim output as the basis of their *incredible* run-time claims (see below).



We believe the run-time claims on headlamps REI sells and markets today are more than just misleading your members, but are in fact *deceptive*. Furthermore, we believe they are in violation of [FTC's Section 5: Unfair or Deceptive Acts or Practices](#).

We've written an article to share our findings, which you'll find here:  
<http://www.outdoorgearlab.com/a/11165/Why-Headlamp-Claims-are-Deceptive>

### **Why is REI Complicit in Deceptive Headlamp Claims?**

You may not be aware of this little fact, but in 2008 and prior years, the marketing claims of headlamps were all over the map. REI, along with a group of headlamp and flashlight manufacturers got together and created a sensible standard for marketing claims that were codified in the 2009 American National Standards Institute (ANSI) *FL1 Flashlight Basic Performance Standard*. In helping develop the FL1 standard, we think REI helped move the industry forward in a positive manner.

But, then things went south.

The headlamp manufacturers decided they didn't want to go along with the ANSI standard for battery run-time claims. And, while they adhere to the ANSI FL1 standard for every other specification on their marketing materials, they ignore the ANSI standard for battery run-time claims.

What we find even more disturbing is REI's public statements that endorse this deceptive alternative to the ANSI FL1 standard for battery run-time claims:

Why 2 meters (6'6")? The average American height is about 5'9" (male) and 5'4" (female). Thus headlamp makers consider a headlamp serviceable if it can project 0.25 lux, the equivalent of a full moon's light, on the terrain in front of an on-the-move adventurer in the dark. It's a legitimate calculation that REI's Quality Assurance Lab endorses.

REI again implies that 0.25 lux at 2 meters is just like hiking under full moon light. We can only conclude that they've never actually tried it.

REI has not just stood by while headlamp manufacturers *run roughshod* over the ANSI spec you helped develop, your QA Lab has proactively endorsed the deceptive alternative the manufacturers have selfishly embraced. We believe this, in combination with REI's re-communication of this misleading run-time specs your buying guide handouts, makes REI complicit.

You can read the full details in our article, [Why Headlamp Claims are Deceptive](#).

### **What Can the CEO of REI Do About It?**

We would like you to instruct your QA Lab team to *reconsider their endorsement* of these misleading battery run-time claims.

We believe REI's Quality Assurance Lab may not have not fully understood the unrealistic expectations these claims set for headlamp performance, or anticipated how today's headlamp designs *game the specs* to justify totally misleading claims of run-time.

We believe your members would be much better served by asking any headlamp manufacturer whose products are sold at REI to adhere to ANSI FL1 specs for battery run-time prior to the 2014 holiday season (Oct 15, 2014).

A Fall 2014 date provides adequate time to revise packaging, websites, and marketing materials, and has the added benefit of providing REI members shopping during the holiday period to see realistic claims for battery run-time.

**Thanks for Your Consideration**

I would like to point out that we write you as unqualified fans of REI. I have personally been a proud member and customer of REI for more than 30 years. Our Editors have deep respect for REI's stellar reputation for customer service, your industry leading 100% Satisfaction Guarantee, and your history of environmental stewardship.

We see REI as a powerful advocate for member's interests, and we see this as a small, but important, issue in which REI has the power and influence to make a difference for its members.

Regards,

Randy Spurrier  
Co-founder  
OutdoorGearLab

