

**To:** Mayor Josh Morgan, Members of the Community and Protective Services Committee

**From:** Christine Wilson

**Re:** 12th Meeting of Community and Protective Services Committee, August 15, 2023, Item PPM, Fireworks By-law Review on the Agenda

Hello Mayor Morgan and CSPC Committee Members,

I am writing to ask that the Mayor and Committee Members vote for Option B of the proposed Fireworks By-law to ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks.

I am a social worker who works for a social service agency in our city, so I hope that you can understand why my request comes from a place of deep concern for the mental health of my fellow citizens of London. I work directly with our friends, family and neighbours who are experiencing significant mental health challenges daily, and backyard fireworks are an unnecessary contributor to these challenges. We all know that fireworks are incredibly loud, but the unpredictable nature of these bangs are the issue. Part of the allure of fireworks is this sense of excitement and anticipation that is brought about by the loud, unexpected bangs. However, these unpredictable bangs can cause a person who is not expecting it to go in to fight or flight; a very distressing and destabilizing state which the body reserves for emergencies. And for folks experiencing mental health struggles like PTSD who often exist in a state of high anxiety, this is very easily done. Fireworks, particularly unplanned, backyard fireworks, cause incredible distress to these folks that I work with. And these people are not strangers, these are people we all know; they are our friends and our neighbours. And you have the ability to end this unseen battle they face every single long weekend.

A ban on backyard fireworks would eliminate a big part of this element of unpredictability; folks can plan accordingly knowing what time to expect a city sanctioned, planned fireworks display. They know when it starts, when it plans to end, and where it is. It makes the whole thing so much more manageable, and it can truly save lives.

If you could see the distress these backyard fireworks endlessly being set off over a long weekend can cause, you wouldn't think twice about voting for option B. For the sake of the thousands of us who suffer with mental health challenges, I ask again that you please consider voting for option B to ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks in London.

Sincerely,

Christine Wilson (RSW)