

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

From: Lisa Macklem

1869 Aldersbrook Rd

London, ON

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. There are many reasons that this is the best choice for all Londoners. I personally have misophonia, which is a hyper-sensitivity to noise. This condition can be so severe as to lead to self-harming behavior as coping mechanisms. Of course, I'm not the only person who is severely affected by loud noises, and there are other conditions even more severe than my own such as PTSD. The unregulated use of fireworks in neighborhood displays can be dangerous to both users and their neighbours, potentially ending in physical harm or destruction of property due to improper handling of fireworks. I remember an incident from my own childhood where a local neighbourhood display ended when a spark flew into the fireworks box, setting them all off with many simply shooting along the ground and into the crowd. It's a miracle that there weren't more severe injuries that day.

In addition to the harm caused to our human neighbours, there is also a great deal of harm caused to animals exposed to fireworks. I think of my own dog, who was never afraid of thunderstorms but would have severe fear and anxiety when exposed to fireworks. The high-pitched whine before the loud bangs is what triggered him. Obviously, dogs that already have a fear of thunderstorms are even more likely to be terrorized. I also own a horse. He lives almost next door to a shooting range. The shooting range used, incidentally, by the Police College. There are a wide range of weapons discharged on a virtually daily basis. He never reacts to

these noises. He does become upset when a thunderstorm is coming, and he is much more distressed by fireworks.

Finally, I am prompted to request the ban on the sale of consumer fireworks due to the behavior of many of the people in my own neighbourhood. Prior to the Pandemic, there would always be a few nights before or after Victoria Day or Canada Day when one or two neighbors would set off fireworks for 30-60 minutes. However, during the Pandemic it was common for fireworks to go on from about 8pm to 2 or 3am for several days – and often seemingly randomly. I live near a ravine and several public parks, and there would often be unregulated fireworks being set off – regardless of any fire bans or noise regulations. Unfortunately, my neighbours have proven that the only solution would be a complete ban of sales AND use by consumers.

I ask again that the committee vote for Option B and implement fines and enforcement to ensure that a ban on sales and use is successful. I know that you will have received a number of letters asking for Option B and that you will have received lists of other communities that have banned consumer fireworks. In addition there are many alternatives to fireworks displays and there are also many other reasons to ban them. I have only tried to provide you with some of my own personal experience. The mental and physical health of both the humans and animals who live in London depend on this ban.

Sincerely,

Lisa Macklem