

Dear Honourable Mayor and City Council Members,

Greetings from Tatvamasi (TAT), London Ontario.

Hope this email finds you all doing well.

Tatvamasi (TAT) is a registered not-for-profit organization of over 300 **Hindu families in London** hailing from Kerala, a province of India. TAT is also part of the advocacy **Hindu Legacy group**, representing the South Asian Hindu community in London.

TAT objectives are collective action of the members in community development activities, promoting cultural social events and organizing and training the children as community service volunteers.

It is very unfortunate to learn that the City of London is **considering a ban on backyard fireworks** for now, with some proponents, who want it banned altogether, which in effect makes Option B, a foot in the door and a slippery slope.

We, the **Hindu Community**, the supporters of cultural diversity, come together to petition against the proposed ban on fireworks, particularly during our **sacred Diwali festival a Hindu religious celebration**.

The proposed **Option B under consideration** will essentially eliminate or deny the rights to Londoners to have vibrant celebrations on a little over a couple of important days for Canadians, especially children, and turn these into another set of drab celebrations, minus the vibrancy and joyousness.

Further under **Option B -availability of Permits for backyard fireworks-** **has not considered the following** (a) **Diwali is a family celebration at home** (b) It would be near impossible to navigate the bureaucracy to get permits for people without the language, advocacy skills, single families and low SES families.

As **Hindus, fireworks hold deep spiritual and cultural significance**, representing the triumph of good over evil and symbolizing the joyous unity of our community. We implore authorities to recognize the importance of fireworks in our traditions and allow us to continue observing our festivities with reverence and joy.

We are fully committed to upholding the well-being of our city and its inhabitants and to this end, offer to educate our community about **responsible and safe backyard firework usage** and participate in the cleanup efforts after the celebrations.

Once again, the Hindu Community **does NOT support** a ban on backyard fireworks.

Sincerely

Tatvamasi, London Ontario.