

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

From: Lorrie Miller

Re: 12th Meeting of Community and Protective Services Committee, August 15, Fireworks By-law Review

Hello Mayor Morgan and CSPC Committee Members,

I realize that by now, many of us are educated on the negative effects that fireworks can have; harm to local birds, wildlife, and household pets, negative impacts on water and air quality, increased pollution, as well as the human impacts that the loud and unexpected bangs ringing out into the night can have on some of our most vulnerable in the community. As Londoners, we are fortunate to share our spaces with people from all walks of life: the parents with a new infant, the families who love their dog more than anything, the night-shift worker, the refugee's who have fled from war, the veteran with PTSD. When we say that fireworks should be allowed in backyards in the days around holidays, what are we really saying? Are we saying that the people of our city must sacrifice the feeling of safety and comfort in their homes so that we can enjoy a few minutes of spectacle? This is not a hypothetical, there is real and tangible harm done to members of our community every time a firework blasts. A quick internet search shows thousands of examples of people's pets dying during neighborhood fireworks. Pets have died from fear, people have woken up panicked that their lives may be in danger. Fireworks are loud, fireworks are frightening, especially when they go off at times that are unpredictable. The whole week surrounding a day of celebration should not be riddled with blasts causing restless nights of anxiety and sleep disruption.

The impacts of fireworks go beyond the human impact, they reach every corner of our community. Despite their temporary visuals, fireworks are not benign. They are composed of toxic chemicals, they combust and produce carcinogenic byproducts that remain in the air, water, and land of our beautiful city. As wonderful as the fireworks can be, the damage they do to the nature around us is ugly. During my time volunteering at a wildlife rehabilitation center I have witnessed firsthand the damage done to birds and mammals as a direct result of fireworks. In an effort to escape, animals will injure themselves on fences and get hit by cars, and the stress from the noise alone can kill small animals. The noise can also cause baby birds to become separated from their parents, often leading to their death. We are designated as a bird friendly city, the forest city, yet here we are, faced with a choice. We can be the city we claim to be and stand by our wildlife, forests, and river, or we can succumb to the easy path of tradition, resigning ourselves to complacency in the face of change.

As Londoners, we know what it means to take care of our environment, we know what it means to sometimes put difficult policies in place to keep ourselves safe, and to keep our beautiful city healthy. I am here today to advocate for Option B, the clear choice for our community. Option B simplifies and clearly outlines what Londoners can expect from fireworks, eliminating the confusion around consumer fireworks. The people of London can look forward to community

celebrations instead, with a set schedule and location, bringing ease to those who may normally suffer around the holidays. The discussion around fireworks is really quite simple. What do we gain from this? Knowing the harm to our neighbors, our wildlife, our city, what is there to gain? We must choose, is our desire for individual entertainment going to outweigh the evidence of harm to our natural environment and our city? The choice is clear, it only makes sense that we support each other as a community and respect not only our neighbors but the beautiful wildlife we share this city with. Option B makes the most sense, it's time for change.