

DIRKA U. PROUT

London, ON ·

August 14, 2023

Mayor Josh Morgan and other members of the
Community and Protective Services Committee

Via email to cpsc@london.ca

**Re: 12th Meeting of Community and Protective Services Committee, August 15, 2023,
Item Agenda 3.1**

Dear CPSC,

Public firework displays brought a lot of joy to me, particularly as child. Sadly this is not the case for the environment, wildlife and vulnerable persons such as children and those suffering from PTSD, autism, and sensory disorders. After much reflection on the harms posed by fireworks, I request that the Mayor and other CPSC Members vote for Option B of the proposed Fireworks By-law PW11 to ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks.

Legal and illegal fireworks can cause fire damage. While City sanctioned professional fireworks displays are properly cleaned up, there are many irresponsible individuals that leave plastic and hazardous waste at unsanctioned events. Fireworks have been documented in a 2010 Spanish air quality study as producing metal pollution that lingers in the air for days. The government of Australia has documented increased discomfort for asthma sufferers and higher seizure rates for epileptic individuals after fireworks displays. Transient elevated levels of these toxic and finely respirable particles are a health hazard particularly for those suffering from respiratory conditions. These particles eventually fall to the ground and wind up in our lakes and rivers further threatening wildlife.

Emitting sounds as loud as 190 decibels (dB), 110 to 115 dB above the level required causing hearing loss in humans, close proximity to fireworks can damage the hearing of humans and pet dogs. Fireworks startle wildlife and cause them to perish due to blunt-force trauma after colliding into vehicles, buildings and trees. A 2008 federal study from California, USA found that seabirds abandon their nests after a fireworks show. Imagine the impacts of such abandonment on the future of species-at-risk in the London area.

It came as a surprise to me that in 2021, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission found that 11,500 children were treated in American emergency rooms due to firework related injuries. Many play with popular sparklers that can burn at 1,093 degrees Celsius, the same temperature as a blow torch, which is hot enough to melt many metals. Like many Londoners, I have been discomforted by fireworks going off outside permitted times and locations. London is home to veterans and has welcomed many persons from war-torn countries like Sudan, Syrian and Ukraine who may have PTSD. Unexpected discharges of fireworks for these persons, along with neurodivergent people, can be triggering, traumatic and disruptive.

Fortunately there are many low-noise/quiet and safer alternatives to fireworks which can bring enjoyment to the young and young at heart for many ages to come. In the spirit of protecting our environment, wildlife and community, I ask that Option B of the proposed Fireworks By-law PW11 be adopted.

Sincerely,

Dirka U. Prout