



Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

Namaste from the Hindu Legacy group! Hope this email finds you all doing well.

Hindu Legacy is a registered not-for-profit organization. Hindu Legacy is an **umbrella organization for the Hindu community of London**. Our mission is to advocate for Hindu causes and educate the public at large about Hinduism and Hindus.

It is very unfortunate to learn that **the City of London is considering a ban on backyard fireworks**. There are many in London who want fireworks to be banned altogether. We are **completely opposed to PW11 Option B**. Option B under your consideration will essentially eliminate and **deny the rights of Hindus** to have vibrant celebrations during the most important **festival of Diwali** and will turn the festival into a drab and dull affair!

Diwali, also known as the **Festival of Lights**, is an ancient Hindu festival, a **sacred occasion** that symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and most importantly, the return to joyousness, new beginnings. Hence, lighting up the dark night has been an **integral ritual of Diwali from ancient times**, with much significance and symbolism.

For Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and some Buddhists, in London, it also means:

- Denying them an **age-old ritual** in a **family setting** that is an **integral part** of Diwali.
- Denying **young Londoners**, the memories of a joyous festival at home.
- Diluting a **critical part** of the culture of Hindus in London.

Proponents of Option B who highlight availability of Permits **have not considered family celebrations** at home. Permits are not available for families, as we understand, which effectively shuts the door to all Hindu families to have a full celebration at home.

Preserving culture, traditions is vital for every community and takes effort, understanding and mutual respect from all. The efforts to resuscitate the culture of the indigenous First Nations people of Canada is a case in point. While we talk of preserving traditions and culture, **bylaws like Option B do exactly the opposite!**

Mutual respect is the bedrock of Hinduism and all we ask is for reciprocation of this to keep our festivals alive on one day of the year for a couple of hours. Option B will dent the City's commitment to honour and preserve cultural traditions and diversity in London.

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 firework usage** and participate in the cleanup efforts after the celebrations. Those Londoners who **violate rules and create social disturbance** during these celebrations need to be dealt with legally on a case-by-case basis. Their action should not adversely **impact the WHOLE Hindu community**.

Once again, the Hindu Community **does NOT support** a ban on backyard fireworks. We also look forward to getting a **speaking slot at the Aug 15** hearing. We also give **permission to publish** this letter.

Sincerely and with respect,

Hindu Legacy (on behalf of the Hindu Community)