

From: Sharon Deebrah

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2023 1:20 PM

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Cc: dlronson@gmail.com; lfp.letters@sunmedia.ca; Michael Luce

Subject: [EXTERNAL] London Fire Works Ban. Agenda item 6.1 for Council Meeting August 29, 2023 - Need Direction

Dear Hon. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Mayor Josh Morgan et Al:

Attn: Council Agenda: I give permission for my submission to be added to the council agenda of August 29, 2023 under the fire works ban Agenda Item 6.1

I hope this email finds you well. As a resident of London, I am writing to ask that you consider voting for Option B, when discussing fireworks in Council on Tuesday, August 29, 2023. I was very sorry to learn that war veterans suffering from PTSD finds fireworks as a trigger and harmful.

Our veterans need a safe place to reintegration into society after serving our country and the effects of fireworks on their mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is not conducive with their war recovery plan.

I believe it is crucial to address the impact of fireworks on the mental health triggers of not only veterans; but also refugees of war suffering from PTSD. Moreover, considering the current concerns surrounding climate change, I propose that we transition from traditional fireworks to alternative forms of celebration, such as laser light shows. Not only would this help mitigate environmental harm, but it would also alleviate the potential distress caused by loud explosions for veterans experiencing PTSD.

I kindly request you connect with resources and subject matter experts such as individuals or organizations who can provide insights and research on this matter. It is my belief that a comprehensive understanding of the effects of fireworks on veterans' mental health would greatly contribute to informed decision-making and policy development. I should point out that Woodstock Ontario and Montreal have both voted in favour of a ban of fireworks .

I understand that some arguments against the ban revolve around the Diwali celebrations and concerns regarding the Charter of Rights and Human Rights. However, as someone from an inter-faith and biracial family, I can attest that Diwali celebrations do not necessitate the use of fireworks. In many cases, the display of fireworks is primarily used as a status symbol rather than a religious requirement. Diwali is a celebration of choosing good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and making environmentally conscious choices. If any religious claim were to be made, it would be the Chinese culture's association as they are credited for the invention of fireworks.

In light of the human rights claims made, I firmly believe that the well-being of veterans suffering from PTSD and the preservation of the environment outweigh any so-called religious desires for loud explosions that contribute to pollution. Given the prevalence of respiratory diseases and the urgent need to address climate change and prevent forest fires, it is imperative to consider a ban on fireworks, especially during dry seasons.

I kindly request that you thoroughly research and consider the arguments I have presented and extend your support for a ban on fireworks in writing. Your intervention in the form of a letter or contact with the London Mayor and Council members would greatly influence their decision-making process, guiding them to prioritize the well-being of veterans and the environment over political motivations. Addressing this matter promptly can prevent decisions that prioritize political gain over the well-being of veterans and the environment.

For my personal research:

1. I have since contacted the Mayo Clinic, National Institute of Mental Health, and found out that PTSD is indeed a triggers.

2. I have searched academic databases: Platforms like Google Scholar, PubMed, or JSTOR allows searches for scientific articles and research papers related to PTSD and fireworks. You can use keywords such as "fireworks," "PTSD," and "war veterans" to lead you to relevant studies.
3. I have contacted the Chief Librarian of the Toronto Reference Library who has put me in touch with staff who found books on the subject: PTSD, military veterans, and the impact of triggers like fireworks.
4. I have since connected with relevant organizations: that specialize in supporting war veterans with PTSD, such as the Wounded Warrior Project, the Sunnybrook Health Science Centre K Wing for war veterans in Toronto, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). They have resources, research, and articles that discuss the effects of fireworks on veterans with PTSD.
5. I have since reached out to the Minister of Veteran Affairs. I have further consulted with medical professionals, mental health experts and found that they work on a daily basis with veterans looking to personalised treatment and guidance on managing PTSD triggers like fireworks.
6. I refer you to Councillor Keenan's letter (he's a City of Brampton councillor who led the motion to ban fireworks in Brampton). His submission begins on Pg. 138. He writes in part, "*When presenting the possibility of this ban within London, you will receive many residents, or even fellow Council members, asking how you will be able to enforce such a ban. The strategy that I put forth, alongside our leadership team, was to use other city departments on major nights to help spread the word and educate those whom were still setting off fireworks. We had parks & rec monitoring the parks, and fire prevention and public works employees providing education and street patrols. When residents weren't listening to those city officials, then By-law would visit those calls and enforce fines.*"

I encourage you to do your research in making your decision that leads to policies on Tuesday. I also hope that a collaborative political discussion surrounding this issue would lead to proactive thinking in policy making. Please keep in your minds our war veterans during this process, as they endangered their lives to served our country and needs to feel safe at home.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust that you will recognize the urgency of this matter and take the necessary steps to support the ban on fireworks. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,
Sharon Deebrah

I acknowledge that I live and work in on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak, and Attawandaron peoples.