

Jack Bernard
4116 Burton Ave.
Erie, PA 16504-2428

December 6, 2021

Kerry Golden
Executive Director
Pennsylvania House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

Re: Testimony for Joint Hearing Regarding Fireworks, December 15, 2021

Ms. Golden,

Please enter my testimony into the record for the public hearing regarding fireworks.

Act 43 of 2017 has been one of the most devastating laws enacted by the legislature. The problem, specifically, is that it unleashed the constant, year-round use of these products on the populace. It used to be that we could expect to deal with it around the 4th of July and some around New Year. Fireworks retailers are in fact pushing this year-round use through their advertising. Please see attached Rizer Fireworks ad. **Now it seems that everything must be celebrated with fireworks.**

In urban areas the onslaught is outright illegal for the most part. The law stipulates they must be used at least 150' from occupied structures, are not permitted on public property, and in most urban areas not after 11PM. ALL of these conditions are routinely violated in the City of Erie. The Erie police have told me directly that **this is an unenforceable law**. Please review the beginning of the video link at the end of this letter. You will note that a haze of gunpowder smoke can be seen over the City of Erie in the video. This was from July 4th 2020 and that haze was still hanging over the city on the morning of July 5th as reported by the local weather forecasters.

My own personal experience and involvement centers around one of our dogs that is terrified of them. We have spent thousands of dollars on medication and mitigation. When it was primarily around July 4th, we could prepare for it. In the Summer of 2020, I documented 46 straight nights of fireworks going off in our SE Erie neighborhood, from dusk into the early hours of the next morning. **This is disrupting the lives of many taxpayers.**

When I began to research the problem, I found that I was not alone. In fact, what I discovered is that the problem goes well beyond frightened pets. Veterans and others with PTSD, those on the Autistic Scale, the elderly, those with sleep disorders and decent folks just trying to enjoy a quiet, summer evening have all been adversely affected. In rural areas other domestic and farm animals are also routinely traumatized. Wildlife is threatened. Air and ground pollution are produced by fireworks. **OUR rights are being violated by those that are abusing the privilege they have been given.**

In 2020 I created the Pennsylvania Communities Against Fireworks page and group on Facebook. We have attracted concerned citizens from across the state. We have also networked with similar groups both in PA and in other states. While we are concerned with righting the wrong that has been done in PA, make no mistake, this is a national problem. **The pyrotechnics industry is out of control, pushing their products relentlessly with no regard or accountability for the devastating consequences.**

Please take 5-minutes to enter and view this video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtoZU6wMolU>
It is a public service video we created that succinctly sums up the issue. In addition, I have attached some notable fireworks incidents that have occurred in the state since Act 43 took effect. **YOU MUST REPEAL ACT 43.**

Jack Bernard, Erie
Pennsylvania Communities Against Fireworks
<https://pcafireworks.weebly.com/>