

December 2, 2021 – *via email transmission to Committee staff*

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Members of the PA House and Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees

December 2, 2021

Dear Members of the PA House and Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees, and Kerry Golden, respectively:

On July 4, 2021, and during more than one evening prior to that holiday, large - loud - and, numerous fireworks were being set off within close earshot of the home I have both owned and occupied since 1989.

On the 4th, the booms were in such close proximity, I peeked out to witness enormous explosive products bursting all around my corner lot; simultaneously, my neighbor David DiLoreto, living on the west side of the Poplar Street side of my house, texted me to declare that they were exploding OVER MY ROOF.

Then - though my house was tightly shut, gapping windows taped - I began to notice the smell.

Immediately upon receipt of his text, I ran out to my front porch. I could see the explosives being shot off ON THE CORNER less than 20 feet from my front door, from a vertical tubular device mounted near the NE sewer drain, and could also see various materials ON MY SE sewer drain corner, which is less than 10 feet from my porch steps. Please see attached photo of said materials.

My neighbor directly to the south of me, at 2203, was outside with her children and an unidentified man. Her home is a mere 9 feet from mine, on the south side. I ran to the sidewalk, and looked up, and could see a LARGE CLOUD of smoke over my roof!!! I was trembling, and shrieked to them that my house could catch fire.

Then, I ran inside and upstairs to the second floor "loft". The smell up there was saturating - toxic, chemical and sulfur smelling - and, there was a haze of smoke IN THE LOFT! Terrified, I grabbed my phone and called the fire department.

Two trucks came without delay, sirens blaring. I was outside, with my 1838 French cello and my Macbook, pacing the sidewalk when they arrived. As I paced, two neighbors from across the W

22nd street side came across the street and spoke to me, stating voluntarily that *their* homes were *also* filled with smokey stench. These were residents whose dwellings were at least 200 feet from mine!

The fire crew examined my interior, and came out, and said they could find nothing burning within the interior. I exclaimed to them that the explosions had been occurring over my rooftop, and one fireman said that there wasn't much they could do to prevent such from occurring, although the ordinance did state that fireworks were only permitted to be set off a certain distance from UNOCCUPIED dwellings. Clearly, every dwelling at all four corners of W 22nd & Poplar except one was occupied, at the time; most of their residents were now outside, observing the fire department's activities after hearing the sirens.

When the fire department left, and residents returned to their homes, the man whom I could not identify came around the Poplar corner on a motorcycle. When he saw me on the sidewalk, still carrying my cello, he stopped. He told me that my "roof would not burn, because it was made of metal." I told him that the house was constructed of wood, built in 1895, and all the eaves and most of the windows were all framed in wood. He rode away.

Ladies and gentlemen of the House and Senate, this scourge isn't merely about noise pollution. It isn't about harassment. It's about carcinogenic and otherwise toxic fumes, precipitate, and progeny from explosives, designed to be set off hundreds of yards to miles away from organic life but falling out of the air above our HOMES and seeping directly into our eaves and vents and filling the space INSIDE our homes with poisons which cannot dissipate except within the enclosed air we breathe night and day. And, once is already more than enough - but, these episodes are ongoing, for weeks at a time, having occurred through much of the summer in our region.

Mere regulations don't stop the actions of those who are certain no consequences will befall them. Establishing clear, restrictive, and punitive laws to end this nightmare is the only equally clear solution. Please act to protect both the health and safety of us as residents, renters and homeowners alike, as well as the environment wherein we grow our food.

Thank you!

Sincerely

Ruth Ann Scanzillo,  
Erie homeowner @ 2201 Poplar Street; regional professional musician; retired public school educator, related arts; registered private Suzuki string teacher, Erie Suzuki String Chorale.



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