

December 10, 2021 – via email transmission to Committee staff

I have been a resident of Pennsylvania for most of my life – born and raised in the state, and I am currently a resident of Berks County. Are you familiar with the area? It is less than 70 miles outside of Philadelphia, comprised of residences and businesses dotting the landscape of farms for crops and livestock, including horses. I happen to be fortunate to live on 10 acres. After moving here two years ago and fixing the place up, the intention was to share the boarding opportunities with friends and their horses. However, you could say my dreams went up in smoke. In good conscience, I cannot allow any of my friends' horses here, knowing what I know now. The place is not safe for most livestock, solely due to the irresponsible use of fireworks by my neighbors.

You would not know, but my neighbors bragged that they used to perform local community fireworks show every year on July 4th. Now they happily do them at home, next to my property. I moved here specifically for the perceived calm and to continue having horses. Instead, I entered a war zone because of the PA Fireworks Law Act 43 of 2017. My "dream come true" is in fact a nightmare.

I cannot go to bed until very late. And, I do not sleep because soon I have to go back outside and check on horses and check for downed fences. I never know when it's going to happen. No one can blame the deer and wildlife, who get scared off by my neighbors. Instead, I blame PA Fireworks Law Act 43 of 2017 and the rights you stripped from me and from local police. I cannot even walk my dog at night in safety or in peace.

Pyrotechnics including mortars are set off by neighbors all the time next to the pasture's fence – during holidays, and between holidays, when the Eagles actually win, and when the New Jersey Devils lose, when Ruth Ginsberg passed, and when Trump lost the election, when the sun is out, and during rain, when there is a full moon, or when Walmart dropped prices on soft toilet paper.

Perhaps I should be more specific about the incidences experienced here. On New Year's 2019-20, I happened to be home due to a change of plans. I am glad I was here because both neighbors set off a 20-minute midnight show. It appeared to be commercial-grade fireworks that were absolutely positively set off over my pasture, over my horses' heads, over my head, the hay shed, the barn, and other buildings and vehicles on the property. There was no warning. There never is. Their striking and flashy display of fireworks was big and high. It was the type I would see in my youth in the Lawncrest area of Philadelphia long ago, or more recently at Waltz Golf Club in Limerick, PA. These two neighbors also used mortars and other things that were loud and invasive. So there I stood as the New Year rang in, alone, between my horses and them, bedraggled and confused, while debris rained down on the buildings and vehicles. My one horse, who is healthy but aged, stood in shock. Darby is her name. She was unmovable for over an hour after their show was over. I yelled in their direction, Are you people crazy? No response. I heard the laughter. I did not hear apologies from them. Nobody asked if I or the horses were okay.

It was not a one-time thing. Through the winter (even when there was snow) and through spring, day or night, there would be 1-minute bursts of fireworks – sometimes once a day/night, sometimes a few times, but hours apart. I suppose it was practice or maybe for the thrill of making a lot of noise approximately 150 feet from my bedroom window. On July 4, 2020, they had a 40-minute show. It was a long one, compared to New Year's. Again, their "show" was at the edge of my pasture. The fireworks were set off next to and over the property, such that debris rained down over everything. The horses were scared. I added another charger to my electric fencing soon after this incident.

The neighbors' friends were in attendance and applauded; meanwhile, my horses ran to a corner and stood terrified. I found out later some people had carpooled in.

More fireworks were set off over the days and months that followed, in short bursts. By the time I got outside, it was over. Again, the scared horses were standing in the corner. I asked myself if this was practice? Maybe.

Their next hell raiser was a 45-minute show at midnight on New Year 2020-21. That night, I bowed out of plans because I am a prisoner on this property. I cannot leave. What if the horses get hurt or run through the fence? My neighbors have enslaved me. At that time, I searched and failed to find another property within the state that is not affected by the PA Fireworks Law Act 43 of 2017. I wondered if, after 40 years of horse experience, maybe I should not have them

anymore. I cannot ride them safely alone because I never ever know when a firework or mortar will be set off. Neighbors have done it while I am handling the horses. Although my horses are well trained, accidents can happen. Also, I would prefer my 80-year-old mother not learn I broke my neck because my neighbors were exercising their right to make things go boom.

If you wonder if I ever talked to the neighbors, the answer is yes. I finally caught up with them outside, after they randomly sent off a firework over my field. I came in peace and searching for resolution. Nevermind that my neighbors think my horses are boys (they're girls, actually). They think my horses like fireworks. I explained nicely that they run and hide when fireworks are set off. One of my horses, in particular, is now 22 years old, and another (who has lung problems, a fact that will become important later) is 19 years old. I take very good care of them, or so I thought. I must say it is difficult to properly care for and handle horses since my neighbors have set up a trifecta of fear for them. Fireworks are (1) scary loud sounds, (2) with bright flashing lights, and (3) burning smells - all of which assault the senses in horses which are prey animals.

Horses are not aggressive, like a dog or a cougar. They will run when scared, which is triggered by a flight response in their brain. That is right. Fireworks completely assault their senses. My neighbors left me with no ability to train my horses through these things because they never let me know when they would set them off, day or night, random or on a holiday. The police were called once when neighbors set off fireworks on a spring Sunday night. They believe that call was from me, so they had to know on some level how they were affecting things here on the farm.

So, to get along with these two neighboring residences and attempt to work things out mutually, I tried establishing a learning opportunity for my horses. I asked my neighbors not to set them off over the pasture and buildings and to please let me know in advance when they were going to do it. They agreed, "Sure, sure, no problem. We don't want to be a problem. That is a great idea..." and we exchanged numbers.

I was hopeful. Sometimes I would hear from them. Most times, however, they would not text me. They set another mortar off over my pasture, and I walked up and asked if they meant to do that. They explained they bought a remote that they are testing out because he said he "...almost blew my hand off last year. Wow! That was a close call." They then let me know they bought \$10,000 worth of fireworks! They and the other neighbor had more, and they were setting them off on July 4, 2021, and having a big old party. Stunned, I thanked them for letting me know and they agreed to keep me in the loop. (Spoiler alert! They did not.)

I did my best to plan accordingly. I looked for a temporary place to keep my horses while these "at-home professionals" did their thing for the holiday. Unfortunately, I could not find a safe place for my horses in Pennsylvania. So I lined up my vet, friends, extra fencing, medicine for possible injuries, and horses' sedatives. Usually calm and reasonable, I was shaken. I had nowhere to go on short notice. I had to stay here and ride things out.

A few days before the holiday weekend, I received a text to say that they would have the fireworks on July 3 instead of the 4th. So I changed my plans. On July 3, it rained. I texted my neighbor to ask if they would still have the show because of the weather. Their response was, "Hi no show is going on." I responded, "Okay, tomorrow will be nicer." And that was the last I heard from them. Then, a friend pointed out to me that cars were arriving next door. Darkness was coming. I headed to the pasture. I saw a sizeable moving type van, 10 feet from my field. They were unloading boxes and boxes and running back and forth with an ATV. I wondered if they are setting up for tomorrow? I called out to them. They just waved at me. I texted them again. No answer. It was now too late for me to sedate my horses. Then it happened...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

These two neighbors set off fireworks.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Heavy smoke swallowed up the ground and rolled my way. Now I called the police.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Two police cars came, and the property was fully engulfed of smoke and noise. It looked and sounded as though I was in the middle of the forest fire or a war...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!..... BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!..... BOOM!BOOM!BOOM!
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!.....
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!..... BOOM!BOOM!BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!.....
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!..... BOOM!BOOM!BOOM!

...for well over an hour.

It was not a pretty light show. Couldn't see it through the smoke, according to other properties across the street. Well, I believe them. You could not see here and you would fall down unless you knew the property and where to step.

The police said there was nothing I could do. They told me not to talk to the neighbors again. So instead, they sat in my driveway. I welcomed the police to sit there as long as they wanted with their own lights flashing.

The police were powerless because of the PA Fireworks Law Act 43 of 2017.

My dog was locked in my bedroom. My horses were trembling at the front of the property, near the police and their lights, and were struggling to breathe. The whole property, including the barn, was full of smoke. My eyes stung. I also felt heavy with sadness and anger. The police explained that it is the neighbors' right to set off fireworks, next to and over my pasture, anywhere they want, any time they want, as long as it did not go 150 feet near my house, "and that's the law" they said. Livestock and horses are not a consideration, nor am I, a law-abiding citizen, a factor due to this law. My two neighbors reneged on their promise to work with me. The police told me to take it up with you. So here I am, writing after a long day working because my livestock and I were inundated with smoke and fear before that night, during that night, and after.

My neighbors and your PA Fireworks Law Act 43 of 2017 severely compromised my health and that of my horses, who had to be seen by a vet afterward, at my cost of course. One needed an inhaler called Flovent (typically used for humans). Me... I coughed for days later.

And, on July 4 (a mere day later), the two neighbors did it again. They did not communicate with me then (nor since then), but I did sedate my horses in advance due to the holiday, and it was common sense at this point.

For three days after, the whole area was eerily silent. I pointed it out to people. I asked them what they could hear. All replied, "Nothing." That's right. Where there was once noisy chatter by birds and night frogs, my property was now silent except for the occasional snort of traumatized horses. There were no birds, no frogs. It took four days for birds to return to the area. The frogs by the creek never came back. I hope they come back next year. I hope. That is what I am left with—empty hope. Maybe I won't even be here.

It was then that I decided these wonderful, amazing horses are the last I will ever own in the state of Pennsylvania, and perhaps my life unless you change the law.

If you prefer to skim/skip the facts or the emotional side of things, let's talk numbers. I have more acreage than my two neighbors combined. They own 5 acres and 2 acres, respectively. My property (and my livelihood as a senior level designer) pay more toward the county and state and federal taxes than what they contribute collectively. I also contribute a great deal to the community by shopping and purchasing farm supplies and being involved locally. Does this even matter to you? It would seem not unless you prove me wrong by repealing the law. As of now, I have fewer rights than the men who like to blow things up, despite my sacrifices to be a good neighbor. Be that as it may, laws are meant to guide those who lack common sense. Therefore – I beg of you, please ban fireworks from private residential areas and near farms and livestock. Instead, please relocate the use of fireworks to county-owned property on designated holidays, and make it enforceable with permits and licenses. And, give the power back to the police. You have the ability to make horse ownership feasible in the future, and to make fireworks something special again.

Thank you for your valuable time and consideration.

Reference PDF of photos (attached).

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/t3pCnwab8GE>

Regards,

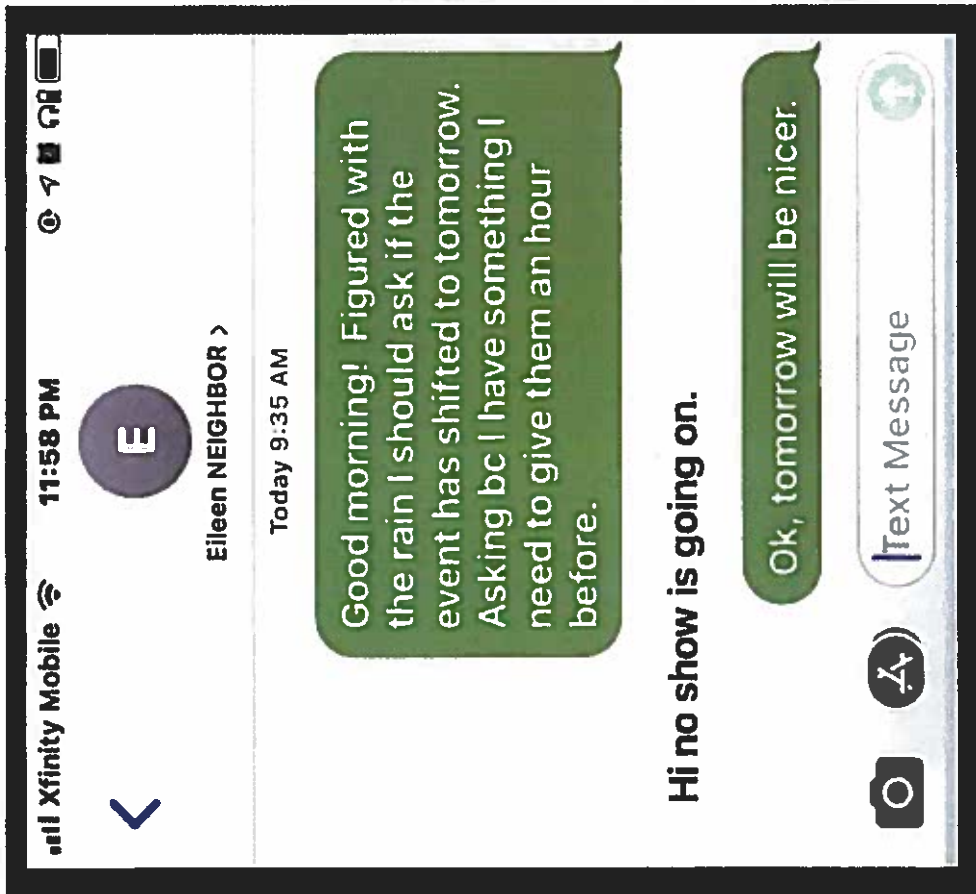
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★ Where fireworks were and are repeatedly set off.

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Denial of fireworks on July 3, 2021



Unloading fireworks behind tree (white box truck)

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A normal day ...and... July 3, 2021



Video Screenshot.

The video is included and labeled as 07-03-2021a

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Smoke rolling over the barn. The light is from their fireworks.

July 3, 2021



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Smoke in riding ring, July 3, 2021



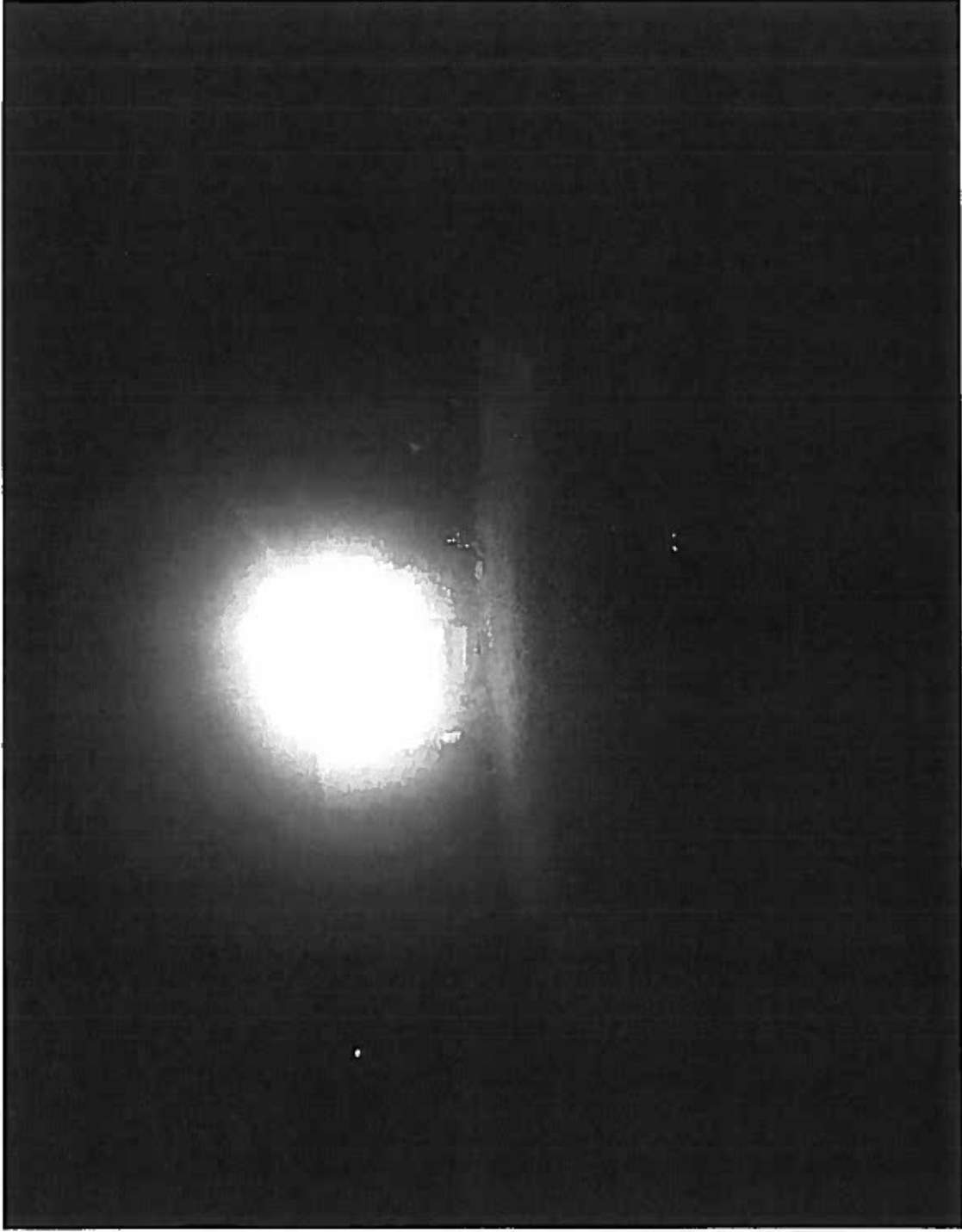
Yarnall

Less than 5 minutes after their fireworks, you cannot see barn buildings and pasture. July 3, 2021



Yarnall

Front of property, where horses were moved to - but everything was still smokey and "blurry": July 3, 2021



Another picture - front of property, where horses were moved.
Everything was very smokey and "blurry". July 3, 2021



Yarnall