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MEMO

To: Senator Yaw, Member, Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Chairman Vogel, Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Minority Chairwoman Schwank, Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Chairman Moul, House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Minority Chairman Pashinski, House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

From: Amy Sturges, Deputy Executive Director – Advocacy, PA Municipal League

Date: January 24, 2022

Re: Consumer Fireworks Hearing Follow-up

During the December joint hearing on consumer fireworks, Senator Yaw asked me to back-up the following statement in my written testimony:

The broad authorization for anyone over 18 to use these fireworks has resulted in deaths, serious injuries and the destruction of homes, businesses and personal property.

As explained during the hearing, our current information on consumer fireworks incidents is anecdotal because data is not collected in a comprehensive and systematic manner in Pennsylvania. Below is a sampling of fireworks incidents occurring over the last 18 months as reported in various newspapers around the state:

June 10, 2020

Lower Milford Township – fireworks stored in a shipping container exploded killing a 50-year old man who owned the property where the container was being stored

June 29, 2020

City of Scranton – a commercial grade firework exploded prematurely causing the death of a 31-year old man

June 21, 2021

Emmaus Borough – a 35-year old man lighting fireworks inside a truck was critically injured when one exploded before he could get rid of it

July 3, 2021

City of Pittsburgh – City task force responded to 88 complaints and issues 32 warnings; a high school basketball court was damaged when used to set off a large amount of fireworks; property in a city park was also damaged by illegal fireworks use

July 4, 2021

West York Borough – a 2 alarm fire caused by improper disposal of fireworks resulted in the death of one child; a second child was treated at a specialty burn unit; there was \$300,000 in property damage

July 5, 2021

City of Wilkes Barre – an aerial firework landed on porch setting a family of eight's house on fire; the firework came from a nearby property

July 5, 2021

Lower Merion Township – a volunteer firefighter died responding to a house fire that started on the roof. (As mentioned during the hearing, his death is under investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and electrical has been ruled out as a cause.)

July 6, 2021

City of Lebanon – a three alarm fire at a scrap business was caused by illegal use of fireworks; firefighters were on the scene for 70 hours

July 9, 2021

Mount Pocono – A man suffered severe injuries launching a firework from his groin

September 12, 2021

City of Bethlehem – a consumer firework landing under a parked car caused an explosion

I am happy to provide the news articles upon request.

The League would like to again thank the Chairs for holding the hearing. We are very interested in working with all of you to change the law prior to the summer months that we know are just around the corner.