

July 2020

To:

I write to you as a resident of the City of Wilkes-Barre regarding my distress with the increased use of consumer-grade Roman candles, bottle rockets and other aerial fireworks, which were made legal to purchase in Pennsylvania under Act 43 of 2017. For weeks now the city has been besieged daily, from sundown to sunrise, with the constant deafening noise and reverberation of these fireworks. I worry about my neighbors who are elderly, those who have young children and pets, and those who suffer from PTSD and the effect which these fireworks have on their peace of mind.

The additional 12% fireworks tax added to the state's 6% sales tax is not worth the stress and unease caused by the constant noise of the fireworks. I also fear these aerial fireworks may land on my home and cause damage to my property and harm to my family. There is no way to predict where the aerial fireworks will land. As you know, under Act 43, the fireworks available for purchase in Pennsylvania may not be used within 150 feet of an occupied structure. As a city of over 40,000 residents, it is difficult to find such open space.

The City of Wilkes-Barre has passed an ordinance stating that "no permission is granted by the city to any person to ignite or discharge consumer fireworks on the streets of the city, the sidewalks of the city, or any property owned by the city, including, without limitation, all of the city's parks and public buildings." Unfortunately, Act 43 preempts municipalities from further regulating consumer fireworks via a municipal ordinance.

I am asking my elected representatives to adopt legislation to repeal Act 43, thereby restricting the use of consumer-grade fireworks. Additionally, I request that municipalities be allowed to set their own firework regulations so that the ordinances can protect the safety of its residents.

In closing, I remind you that the income earned by the State from the taxation of consumer-grade fireworks is not worth more than the safety of Pennsylvania's residents.

Sincerely,