

TO: Pennsylvania Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
FROM: Lisa M. Fraser, resident, Haycock Township, Bucks County, PA
DATE: December 15, 2021
RE: Testimony in support of SB 825

To the members of the Committee:

My name is Lisa Fraser, and I was raised here and lived for the past 45 years in Bucks County PA. In August, 2015 my husband and I purchased a 4 acre farmette in Haycock Township, Bucks County. We were elated to bring our 2 horses which had been boarded for 10 years, home to live on the same property as us. For those who are not familiar with Haycock Township, we are a small working class rural community about 21 square miles with a population of around 2200 people. We have no grocery stores or Wawa's, we do not have a gas station, we do not have a police force or an EMS crew. When you drive through our community you see people who love the land, we hunt and fish, we garden, we enjoy the use of our wonderful local, county and state parks, we farm our land, we raise children and animals here. We enjoy all that the area has to offer.

In 2017, when Pennsylvania expanded the sale and use of fireworks, Haycock and the immediate surrounding area was affected as all other areas in the state. My testimony is not to complain about the bill or ask for its complete repeal but to ask, knowing what we learned over the past 4 years that you vote to amend this bill to make sure those who choose to participate in display fireworks are capable and responsible to do so.

As an example, on March 13, 2021 a non-resident of Haycock Township put on a 40 minute aerial and display fireworks show in a field across the street from our farm. Also on March 13, 2021 a Fire Weather Watch was issued for our area due to dry and windy conditions and no precipitation since March 1, 2021. Because of the cold (mid 20s) and dark clear night the sound of these fireworks were deafening at my farm. I called 911 to report the show after it hit the 30 minute mark. The agent could not hear me over the sound as I was standing in my barn comforting my horses. As in many of these fireworks situations, questions and comments were brought up on a community social media page. This individual messaged me to tell me he "was shooting within curfew, at a slow pace as not to make a constant barrage but some of the cakes last 30-60 seconds". The next day, I spoke to another farm owner whose property abuts the property where this show took place and confirmed there was no event, no party, nothing to warrant a fireworks show of this caliber. We contacted the township and they had no notice of any event at that particular property. Of note, the PA State Police never did show up due to "lack of address" (I had used my address and "field across the street"). I ask that you please refer to the video and still photos attached from this date. Since I now had the contact information of this person, I have noted that he does firework shows around the Quakertown area often. I do not believe he is a legitimate business but does this for fun.

So what does this mean? That any person can decide to put on a 40 minute fireworks show without any notification to neighbors, the municipality, law and fire enforcement. What

would've happened had one of his "cakes" ignited a fire in that field that night and a fire fighter was injured? Could he cover the costs of the damage to the field or any buildings along the way?

I understand that fireworks will not go away nor do I care to have them eliminated. There is a time and a place for them. I have read over SB 825, and if I understand it correctly, it looks as if permits will be required from local municipalities. I believe this is an excellent idea that will help our already spread thin police officers determine whether safety measures and responsibility have been reviewed prior to these shows. All they would need is a copy of the permit. If I am remiss in my understanding of this amendment, please consider those of us who are concerned for the safety of our families, our livestock and our property as well as those of our neighbors. Please look at the data from our large cities and requests from fire and law enforcement whose hands are tied when complaints are lodged. Please work to make the few who ruin for the majority act responsibly.

Thank you all for your commitment to the good of our great state and its people.

Lisa Fraser
685 Apple Road
Quakertown, PA 18951