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Sun Valley Area
Neighborhood Council

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July 14, 2020

The Honorable Mayor Eric Garcetti
Mayor of Los Angeles
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: July 4th, 2020 Fireworks in the City of Los Angeles

Dear Mayor Garcetti:

This past July 4th we experienced a horrendous display of illegal fireworks throughout the City of Los Angeles. In Sun Valley alone, we had two brush fires (in an LAFD designated High Fire Danger Area) both started that night from illegal fireworks, frightening the community and taxing our first responders. The LAFD and LAPD were fantastic, their response time was immediate and the LAPD quickly cordoned off the area, which was very much appreciated. We whole-heartedly thank them and applaud their dedication.

However, we state categorically, we cannot continue, year after year to be assaulted and traumatized because our elected officials do not take decisive actions to put in place what is needed to eliminate illegal fireworks in the City of Los Angeles. Just some of the effects that fireworks cause in our communities:

1. First and foremost, fireworks pose a fire danger in our city that gets very little rain especially this time of year.
2. The loud explosions cause trauma among the community, especially to our elderly and youngsters and the other most vulnerable members of our community such as those with autism. It is particularly distressing to our military veterans who suffer from PTSD. They deserve better.
3. Fireworks frighten domestic animals causing them trauma and often cause them to escape from their owners. Our city shelters see an increase in lost dogs during these months.
4. Fireworks increase air pollution especially in our area that already has a high level of pollutants due to the heavy machinery that passes through Sun Valley on a daily basis.

5. Smoke produced by the illegal fireworks can cause complications for people with respiratory conditions. This should be a heightened concern with COVID, as that disease affects breathing and the lungs.
6. The loud explosions disrupt wildlife, such as domestic and migratory birds.
7. Loud explosions, smoke and debris produced by the illegal fireworks lowers the quality of life around the Sun Valley area.

We hereby request:

- A. The Los Angeles Public Safety Committee analyze what worked and what didn't work since 2018 and Motion 17-1421, (now expired) as a result of reports and proposed plans provided at that time. Please see "Report from the Chief Legislative Analyst" dated 4/17/18: http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2017/17-1421_rpt_CLA_04-17-2018.pdf
- B. Establish a Multi-Agency Los Angeles Fireworks Task Force.
 - a. Under the task force, create a public education program. It is clear, the current public education and laws/enforcement are not working. Goals we request the task force consider exploring would be:
 - i. Create a public education plan, and target areas that had high calls for service during the July 4th holiday period.
 - ii. Explore best methods of how to convey to the public (and our children) just how dangerous fireworks are and to strongly emphasize they are highly illegal and that there are consequences for their possession & discharge, i.e. fines, jail, etc.
- C. Crafting a Fireworks Social Host Ordinance for the City of Los Angeles, (similar to the law intended to hold individuals responsible for hosting or knowingly providing a place for underage drinking.) As an example:
 - a. Property owners can be held liable for illegal fireworks discharged on their property. If fireworks were discharged, the property owner and those attending would be at fault and subject to fines/jail time. (in regard to CA SB 839: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200720080SB839)
 - b. Allow that a witness could testify (under penalty if untruthful) that the fireworks were discharged from a property without police verification. (Our understanding from the LAPD is police cannot issue a citation unless they actually see the fireworks being discharged and can verify the identity of the person lighting the fuse.)
- D. Encourage the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to establish a County Fireworks Social Host Ordinance and a County Multi-Agency Fireworks Task Force to bring resources together across the County and allowing the County and LA City to be on the same page regarding Codes and Ordinances. This would mean more resources available and better communication in creating a plan countywide.
- E. Finally, we strongly request that you impress on our State Legislators to greatly increase the fines/penalties for the transport, possession and discharge of illegal fireworks and express the need for a Multi-Agency Fireworks Task Force under the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Our communities are under siege during July 4th, and we clearly cannot endure another Independence Day holiday (with the blasts starting now on Memorial Day) every year. The

danger is too high, the pollution is too much, and the frayed nerves by humans and animals are just too great.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to our great city.

Respectfully and on behalf of the Board of Directors, Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council,

DocuSigned by:
Monica Vacas
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Monica Vacas
President, SVANC

cc:

City Council President Nury Martinez, CD6

Councilmember Paul Krekorian, CD2

Councilmember Monica Rodriguez, Chair, Public Safety Committee

Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, Vice-Chair, Public Safety Committee

Councilmember Joe Buscaino, Member, Public Safety Committee

Councilmember John Lee, Member, Public Safety Committee

Councilmember David Ryu, Member, Public Safety Committee

LA City Attorney Mike Feuer

LAPD Chief Michel Moore

LAFD Chief Ralph Terrazas

Caroline Menjivar, East Valley Area Representative for the Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti