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**Testimony in Support of LD 1307:
An Act To Restrict the Sale, Purchase and Use of Fireworks in the State**

Dear Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and honorable members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Scott Harriman. I live in Lewiston and I am writing today in support of LD 1307.

Despite fireworks being illegal in much of Lewiston, they continue to be used extensively here every year, especially in the days before and after July 4th. I have contacted City officials with my concerns and ideas on how to do a better job of education and enforcement around this issue. No matter how hard individual municipalities try, though, people can still take a short drive to a different town and buy all the fireworks they want.

The fire danger from exploding fireworks in areas where buildings are only a few yards apart is bad enough, but the stress on people and animals is my main concern. I lose countless hours of sleep every July from being woken up over and over again by illegal fireworks. In addition to losing sleep, I have autism and these extremely loud, intermittent explosions trigger a lot of anxiety and stress for me. Every July 4th, my two cats also exhibit signs of stress and anxiety and usually stop eating. I have heard from several other local people about their pets' distress, too. In 2020, the illegal fireworks in downtown Lewiston started on July 3rd and continued every day and night through July 11th. On the night of July 4th they were fired off steadily until 2am only to start up again at 6am.

I was born in Maine and have lived here my entire life and I find it to be a very special place. With so much of our economy dependent on tourism, we need to get back to what we have always done to set ourselves apart and truly be 'Vacationland.' Our historical bans on billboards and consumer fireworks have been major components of that, but we have unfortunately lost one of them. The last time I took a vacation on Mount Desert Island I had to cut it short by several days because the people who lived next door to the campground were continuously setting off fireworks. I have seriously considered simply going to Québec for a week or two every July (once the border reopens), but I can't bear to leave my cats suffering here alone.

Monetarily, we don't even gain much as a state by allowing fireworks sales. According to annual reports from the Legislature, we bring in just \$30,000-40,000 in licensing fees per year

(<https://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/fireworks>). WGME reported in 2019 that annual sales tax revenue from fireworks is less than \$300,000

(<https://wgme.com/news/local/maines-fireworks-boom-after-legalization-in-2012-is-fizzling>). Contrast that with tourism, which generates tax revenue in the hundreds of millions of dollars. We can't afford to drive tourists away, but we can afford to get rid of consumer fireworks once again.

Mainers and people who visit our state have had to deal with this nuisance for almost a decade now. It is long past time to once again allow us the peace and quiet we used to enjoy for most of our lifetime and prohibit consumer fireworks for good. Some may argue that cities and towns should decide for themselves whether they want to allow fireworks or not, but in reality they do not have that ability, no matter what their local ordinances say. As long as people can simply visit a different town to purchase fireworks they will continue to set them off in our neighborhoods and cause ordinary citizens to suffer.

I respectfully ask the Committee to support LD 1307 and I thank you for your time today.