

Peter and Rebecca Irving
Northfield

We support without reservation LD 1307 for a number of reasons:

1. Loss of quiet enjoyment of property

For the past 41 years our family has lived in Washington County, Maine on a remote lake in Northfield. Northfield consists of a Town office, lakes and forests and approximately 266 residents scattered throughout. When larger local communities ban the use of fireworks, that use travels to remote areas like the lakes and forests of Washington County, destroying the peace, quiet and wildlife habitat --the very reason people chose to live here in the first place. Numerous persons who rent their seasonal cottages for additional income have lost long time renters who no longer wish to be subjected to the noise, pollution and disturbance caused by consumer fireworks.

2. Lack of enforcement ability

With no funds available to enforce the provisions of current consumer fireworks statutes let alone funds to enforce a ban on the use of consumer fireworks, remote towns like Northfield have no ability to avoid consumer fireworks--whenever and wherever users choose to detonate them. That is the situation here.

3. Loss of right to be free of nuisances

And what useful purpose do personal fireworks serve? None. Explosives on the ground, over the water and in the air may provide a momentary excitement to the user--but at what cost and consequence to others? Any individual "freedom" of an individual to use fireworks is exceeded by the negative impacts suffered by his or her neighbors, including infants, children and pets who are endowed with the same "freedom" to be free from explosives and the negative impacts which have significant consequences.

4. Veterans

Peter is a Vietnam War veteran who suffers as a result of his service from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is well controlled when no nearby explosions are occurring. But they do occur-- frequently, at anytime throughout the year and with no prior warning--explosions caused by consumer fireworks which often sound like gunshots or cannon fire. To claim on the one hand Maine cares about its veterans and yet on the other hand ignores the very real consequences suffered by veterans as a result of the explosives caused by fireworks is untenable.

5. Fires

Last year all of Maine suffered a drought. The woods crackled with dryness. Yet unthinking neighbors detonated the largest fireworks allowed, late at night, with showers of sparks raining down into the woods--whether their own or their neighbors. In 2015 there were 4 reported forest fires caused by consumer fireworks. In 2020 the Maine Forest Service reported 20-- a huge increase, costing \$3,000 in property damage, \$710 in personal property damage and \$12,501 to extinguish!

In addition, Maine's fire departments reported an additional 6 fires caused by consumer fireworks.

6. Injuries (to humans)

In 2015 there were 6 traumatic injuries and 1 fatality caused by consumer fireworks. In 2020 there were 14 traumatic injuries caused by consumer fireworks--a 100% increase.

7. Injuries to nesting birds; waterfowl; wildlife in general; pollution of waterways

Fireworks are made of dangerous heavy metals, dioxins and lead that leave a trail of pollution. A common chemical that is released in fireworks is ammonium perchlorate, which is known to contaminate ground and surface waters, and can cause harm to aquatic creatures residing in waterways and lakes.

In the end, consumer fireworks are about public health and safety, environmental damage, and the rights of individuals to enjoy the same peace and quiet they were afforded for the 63 years prior to 2012.