

Thank you, Senator Vogel, for the opportunity to address the Committee on behalf of The PA Pyrotechnics Association and give our position on Senate Bill 1055.

My name is Robert Kellner, and I am the President of Kellner's Fireworks, a wholesale distributor of Consumer and Professional Display fireworks located in Venango County. Kellner's Fireworks was founded by my parents, Robert S and Wilma Kellner, in 1947.

I have served as a Director of the American Pyrotechnic Association for nine years and was the Chairman of their Fireworks Transportation Committee. I have also served as the Committee Chairman of the Display Fireworks International Standards Committee for the American Fireworks Standards Laboratory.

I have given testimony in Federal Court as an Expert Witness on the Fireworks Industry and am currently serving as the Treasurer of both the National Fireworks Association and also the Pennsylvania Pyrotechnics Association (PPA).

My company was one of the founding members of the PPA, which was started over 25 years ago to defend and promote the Pennsylvania Fireworks Industry. Pennsylvania has been home of some of the largest and most World-renowned Fireworks manufacturers and exhibitors for well over 100 years.

As a proponent of the Pennsylvania Fireworks industry, I find myself in the strange situation of voicing the strong opposition of the PPA's Board of Directors and a majority of our members towards Senate Bill 1055, which upon first reading, would seem to make the sale and use of Fireworks easier in Pennsylvania.

The PPA was never contacted by the authors of Senate Bill 1055 and the PPA had no input into this bill.

Current law requires that people in Pennsylvania that wish to shoot Consumer-grade Aerial Fireworks and Firecrackers for a graduation party or 4th of July Picnic must first obtain permission from the local municipality, under reasonable rules and regulations. While it is a fact, that some municipalities make it impossible for the average person to comply with their regulations, other municipalities are quite reasonable in looking out for the safety of not only the person shooting the fireworks, but also for the safety of the audience and the neighborhood.

Senate Bill 1055, however, goes overboard, allowing people to shoot Aerial Consumer Fireworks and Firecrackers at virtually any place, at any time, without any consideration for safety. This bill, while by adding a 10% excise tax on to the unrestricted sale and use of Aerial Fireworks and Firecrackers, would indeed bring in revenue to the state. We, at the PPA, feel that it would be short-lived and create a myriad of problems for local governments, law enforcement agencies, the public safety and pet owners.

Recently, we've had two examples of states that have passed similar fireworks laws--Michigan and Georgia— where the citizen complaints have been overwhelming and where local government officials, while trying to implement the law, have called it "insanity".

The PPA believes that, as written, Senate Bill 1055 would be detrimental to the peace and safety of the public and the long term health of The Pennsylvania Fireworks industry. Therefore, we at the PPA respectfully ask that you do not report this bill from your Committee. Thank you.