

Good morning. My name is Rita Creitz and I am the owner of three horses that I board at a boarding facility in Montgomery County. I am formally submitting my STRONG opposition to House bill 1502.

My reasons for opposition are several:

One. Horses, being prey animals, are easily startled by surprise and sound, and can be uncontrollably fearful of any loud noise or explosion. Fireworks, no matter what the constraints or conditions identified in this bill, are EXPLOSIONS! We had an incident several years ago when a neighbor exploded fireworks. The horses in the nearby field essentially stampeded in their effort to flee from impending danger. One of them broke his leg and needed to be euthanized. It was an UNNECESSARY death of a lovely horse who was deeply loved as a member of the family. UNNECESSARY, HEARTBREAKING GRIEF!!

Two. Fireworks affect how horses are kept safe. In the summer the horses are out all night. But not on July 4. Every July 4, the horses are kept in with the doors closed and with music playing in an effort to keep them calm and out of danger.

Three. This isn't just about horses and their inherent prey animal instinct to flee in times of danger. It is about the dogs that tremble uncontrollably and hide under the bed or hide in the bathroom until the noise stops. My cat hides in the closet. It is also about the wild animals such as deer, rabbits, fox, possums, raccoons, birds, etc. Do we know how it affects them? Does it matter to you?

Four. What about people with PTSD?! Don't you care about their response to fireworks??! You SHOULD CARE!!

Here are my questions for the committee:

There are already restrictions on use of fireworks that are being violated. Why did you feel it was necessary to loosen those restrictions and permit potentially MORE use of them and more violations?

How are you going to enforce this? You're not enforcing the current restrictions so what makes you think you have the personnel to do more?? Is this the best use of your limited resources? Be realistic please!

Finally, what do fireworks really contribute to our society and culture? Can't we celebrate in other ways that are fun to honor a special occasion, AND respect the fear of these EXPLOSIONS by other living beings?

PLEASE, please, do not support this bill.