

TO: House Finance

FROM: Mr. Samuel S.H. Lee

SUBJECT: Testimony in Favor of SB1060 HD1
April 1, 2009 11:00 AM

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I speak in favor of the measure with some concerns and suggestions.

The proliferation of fireworks at both New Years and July 4 has become an increasing public health and safety problem. Legal fireworks produce a great deal of smoke, causing respiratory difficulties for susceptible persons, hazardous driving conditions and produce emotional distress in young children and pets. Police and fire personnel are required to work overtime to monitor the possibility of fire and injury.

To compound this problem, illegal fireworks create bomb-like noise that terrifies animals and has the potential to create ear damage in young children. Illegal aerials also greatly increase the risk of fire and personal injury as they are designed for professional use.

Although I support this bill, a surcharge tax on the sale of consumer fireworks would be a lot more effective than an increase in the permit fee. The effect of a surcharge would be to limit the amounts of fireworks purchased due to the increased cost and the suppliers would be required to report quantities sold and imported. An increase in the permit fee would merely encourage illegal sales.

In essence, I would prefer the bill be amended to resemble HB887, which assesses a surcharge tax on the sale of consumer fireworks and requires retailers to report on fireworks sold. There should be no special fund created as the state could use the funds generated to improve inspections of imported goods such as fireworks.

It is time for the Legislature to take some action on the fireworks problem. This is a start to decrease use and monitor importation and sale.