



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 1

**COUNCILMEMBER LISA HERBOLD**

June 18, 2019

Dear Mayor Durkan,

I am writing to you regarding the forthcoming July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday season in Seattle. According to a 2013 Pemco poll, about one-third of the state's households set off their own fireworks. As I noted when I wrote you last year, I've received an increasing number of constituent complaints during the last three years about fireworks. I myself have experienced what I believe anecdotally to be an increased frequency of fireworks use. Over the years, frequent fireworks noise complaints have made it more difficult for 911 operators, police, and fire officials to respond to life-threatening emergencies across the city.

Two years ago, my office asked questions about SPD's policy and fireworks. In response to those inquiries, I learned in January 2017 that SPD received 132 fireworks complaints from residents in the Southwest Precinct and responded to 16 of them and wrote only two reports. I then asked follow-up questions, intending to base my subsequent requests to SPD related to fireworks law enforcement upon the answers to those questions. I'd hoped answers to these questions would give me a more complete understanding of SPD's practices:

1. How does a dispatcher receiving a call determine whether there is a potential hazard? The intention in asking this question was to understand why there were only 16 SPD responses to 132 complaints.
2. What actions does an officer have available when sent to the scene, and how do they decide whether to take an action, or take no action?
3. What data do we have on the final outcomes of the 16 instances in 2017 when officers went to the scene?

However, despite repeated inquiries to both SPD and your staff I never received any reply to that follow up inquiry, nor did I receive a response to my 2018 letter to you requesting that SPD take a different approach in 2018.

Like last year, my concerns are that with ever-escalating fireworks use, the current laissez-faire approach, will one day result in either someone getting hurt at the scene of an unlawful fireworks display and/or 911 response will suffer with human consequences.

By the way of this message, I am repeating my 2018 request that you ask that SPD take additional and different actions this year. Specifically, my request is that you please give notice to the public in the upcoming weeks leading to July 4 that:

1. Private fireworks use is dangerous and illegal.
2. SPD will exercise a plan in 2019 that will emphasize warnings and confiscation of fireworks to impact behavioral change.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,



Lisa Herbold

CC: Carmen Best, Chief of Police  
Lorena González, Chair Gender Equity, Safe Communities, New Americans and Education Committee