



King County Fire Commissioners Association

We Are **E. P. I. C.**

Educating, **P**romoting, **I**nforming and **C**onnecting
the Fire Service in King County for over 50 years

July 28, 2020

SENT VIA EMAIL THROUGH COUNCIL CLERK: Council@kingcounty.gov

Dear County Councilmembers,

My name is Mark L. Thompson, President of the King County Fire Commissioners Association, representing the elected officials of King County Fire Districts and Regional Fire Authorities.

I am writing you today in support of Proposed Ordinance 2020-0109, Fireworks Ban in Unincorporated King County.

Each year numerous debilitating injuries, serious burns and deaths as well as the destruction and/or damage to property, buildings and wildlands occurs due to non-professional use of fireworks.

As a precaution based on historical data local fire districts and fire departments staff up with extra Aid Cars and Engine Companies on the New Years and 4th of July holidays in an effort to respond exclusively to 911 calls for service due to non-professional fireworks use. These additional staffing costs is a serious financial impact to the limited fiscal resources that fire districts have available.

Annually fireworks related responses increase in numbers and severity with legal and non-legal fireworks.

The King County Fire Commissioners Association support and endorse Councilmember McDermott and Council Chair Balducci's proposed fireworks ban ordinance 2020-0109 for Unincorporated King County.

The Fire Commissioners Association would like to suggest the following amendments to the proposed ordinance in an effort to make the ordinance all-encompassing to deter injuries, death and property damage and destruction as well as environmental damage due to the use of fireworks:

1. Addition of language that would raise the penalty for repeat violations. Every time a violator is cited for the illegal possession and/or use of fireworks, after the first violation, the monetary fine would double for every violation thereafter. Numerous state and local ordinance violations have an escalator clause for repeat violations. This would deter and reduce repeat ordinance violations.
2. Add language to address creating a penalty for fireworks possession/use that results in injury and/or death and the destruction or damage to property and buildings and the wildland environment. The penalty should be increased from a misdemeanor to a gross misdemeanor and repeat violations would be charged with reckless endangerment.

The King Co Fire Commissioners Association supports and encourages the authorization of fireworks possession and use by Licensed Pyro Technicians through the Washington State Fire Marshal Office and

King County Fire Commissioner Association

PO Box 141 Renton, Washington 98057

www.kingcoFCA.org

President – Commissioner Mark L. Thompson

Mark.Thompson@southkingfire.org

Secretary – Commissioner Anita Sandall

asandall@esf-r.org

when a licensed pyro technician has a valid fireworks display permit issued by the King County Fire Marshal.

The King County Fire Commissioners Association encourages you to vote, Yes, for the passage of proposed ordinance 2020-0109 with the above amendments so as to prevent fireworks related injuries, death and destruction or damage to property and the environment starting in 2022. This ordinance will greatly enhance public safety within the unincorporated areas of King County and provides clear public policy and guidance for enforcement with meaningful consequences to protect lives and property.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

Enjoy your summer recess.

Thank you for your support of good public policy and public safety.

Mark L. Thompson

Mark L. Thompson President
King County Fire Commissioners Association

253-344-1823 home

Cc: King County Executive Dow Constantine kcexec@kingcounty.gov

Ms. Rebecca Wells, North Highline Community rebecca@electrum93.com

Chief Matt Morris President mlmorris@pugetsoundfire.org
King County Fire Chiefs Association

Anita Sandall, Secretary asandall@esf-r.org
King County Fire Commissioners Association

Members King County Fire Commissioners Association

King County Fire Commissioner Association
PO Box 141 Renton, Washington 98057
www.kingcoFCA.org

President – Commissioner Mark L. Thompson
Mark.Thompson@southkingfire.org

Secretary – Commissioner Anita Sandall
asandall@esf-r.org