

December 15, 2020

Lavinia Rojas

Dear Lavinia,

Please accept this letter of support for your petition to ban the use of fireworks in the province of British Columbia. The BC SPCA considers fireworks to be a serious animal welfare issue for pets, farm animals and wildlife in our communities:

Fireworks can spook pets and cause them to panic, run away (including escaping out partially open or screened windows) and dart into traffic. Incidences of lost pets increase markedly during and after fireworks displays. Pets can also seriously injure themselves in their attempts to escape.

Roughly 49 per cent of dogs are fearful of loud noises such as fireworks.<sup>1</sup> Dogs who are normally friendly can sometimes act out of character due to fear, placing members of the public, including children, at risk.

Approximately 79 per cent of horses display anxious behaviour during fireworks displays.<sup>2</sup> Spooked horses can easily break through fences, receiving serious injuries including lacerations, sprains and even broken limbs as a result.

In recent years, fireworks have been demonstrated to have a negative impact on bird and marine mammal behaviour.<sup>3,4</sup> In urban areas, birds and other wild animals can be scared from dens and

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<sup>1</sup>Blackwell, E. J., Bradshaw, J. W. S., & Casey, R. A. (2013). Fear responses to noises in domestic dogs: Prevalence, risk factors and co-occurrence with other fear-related behaviour. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 145(1-2), 15-25.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2012.12.004>

<sup>2</sup>Gronqvist, G., Rogers, C., & Gee, E. (2016). The management of horses during fireworks in New Zealand. *Animals* 6(3), 20.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ani6030020>

<sup>3</sup>Shamoun-Baranas, J., Dokter, A. M., van Gasteren, H., van Loon, E. E., Leijnse, H., & Bouten, W. (2011). Birds flee en masse from New Year's Eve fireworks. *Behavioural Ecology* 22(6), 1173-1177. <https://doi.org/10.1093/beheco/arr102>

<sup>4</sup>Pedreras, E., Sepúlveda, M., Gutierrez, J., Carrasco, P., & Quiñones, R. A. (2016). Observations of the effect of a New Year's fireworks display on the behavior of the South American sea lion (*Otaria flavescens*) in a colony of central-south Chile. *Marine and Freshwater Behaviour and Physiology* 49(2), 127-131.

roosting sites, causing them to fly into buildings or run into busy streets to be injured or killed. Those that remain unharmed are still disturbed, leading to reductions in their natural feeding and breeding behaviours, as well as abandonment of their young in nests or dens.

In addition to the above consequences, harmful smoke and garbage waste from fireworks are secondary threats to the health of local wildlife. Pets can also be poisoned from ingesting fireworks.<sup>5</sup>

Thank you for recognizing the needs of the animals with whom we share our communities when considering an end to fireworks provincially. Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 1-855-622-7722 ext. 1326 or [mcant@sPCA.bc.ca](mailto:mcant@sPCA.bc.ca).

Sincerely,



Meghann Cant  
Manager, Companion Animal Welfare Science & Policy

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10236244.2015.1125099>

<sup>5</sup>Gahagan, P., & Wismer, T. (2018). Toxicology of explosives and fireworks in small animals. *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice* 48(6), 1039-1051. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cvsm.2018.06.007>