



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

September 15, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 1403 (Garcia)—Public safety: fireworks: enforcement: funding

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach, I urge your signature on AB 1403. This bill would require the State Fire Marshal, by January 1, 2025, to collect and analyze data relating to fires, damages, seizures, arrests, administrative citations, and fireworks disposal issues caused by the sale and use of dangerous illegal fireworks and safe and sane fireworks. The legislation would also increase the amount of certain fines for violating the State Fireworks Law. Furthermore, the legislation would authorize local agencies to assess a fee to cover the actual and reasonable costs of fireworks enforcement, such as processing permits, inspecting fireworks stands, public awareness and education campaigns regarding the safe and responsible use of safe and sane fireworks, and providing fire suppression efforts. AB 1403 aligns with the City's objectives to support policies and legislative efforts that expand statewide restrictions on fireworks, increase the penalties for anyone cited or arrested for fireworks violations, and provide additional oversight related to the import of fireworks into California, especially through ports.

While all fireworks are illegal in Long Beach, except for professional use, the Long Beach Police Department (LBPd) seized a total of 898 fireworks throughout 2022. During this year's fireworks direct enforcement efforts, which began on May 20 and will continue through July, over 1,025 pounds of fireworks were seized by LBPd, with an additional 686 unused pieces of fireworks seized on July 4 alone. On June 23, 2020, the City Council adopted recommendations for an [Illegal Explosives and Fireworks Action Plan](#) to address the illegal use of fireworks and explosives in Long Beach. An Interdepartmental Fireworks Working Group (Working Group) was established to reduce the incidence and adverse impacts of illegal fireworks in our community. The Working Group has led the implementation of new data collection and reporting mechanisms, developed and executed a robust community outreach campaign, and developed a local illegal fireworks ordinance with fines up to \$20,000, which was adopted by the City Council on July 9, 2021. As a result of these coordinated efforts, fireworks-related calls for service fell from a peak of 8,882 in 2020 to 2,565 in 2022, a 71 percent decrease over the two-year period and roughly equal to 2019 levels.

Despite efforts to curb the illegal sale and possession of fireworks in Long Beach, enforcement remains a serious challenge as neighboring cities not only have incompatible ordinances regarding the prohibition of fireworks, but also implement different enforcement mechanisms and penalties. Therefore, the City supports legislation that would support local enforcement efforts and expand restrictions on fireworks. For these reasons, the City requests your signature on AB 1403.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 65th District
The Honorable Josh Lowenthal, State Assembly, 69th District

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