

December 23, 2010

Lori Grant, Chair
Committee on the Environment
City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703

Terry Kelly, President
Madison Fireworks Fund, Inc.
6515 Grant Teton Plaza, Suite 140
Madison, WI 53719

Dear Mr. Kelly:

Last spring, citizens raised concerns to the City of Madison's Committee on the Environment about the potential for detrimental environmental impacts from fireworks. Scientific staff from the Environmental Health Division of Public Health of Madison and Dane County attended both our May and June, 2010 meetings to provide information. Environmental Health had data indicating there was no impact on water quality from fireworks at Warner Park, although perchlorate was not one of the contaminants tested. Upon our request, they also conducted a review of available literature to assess potential human health threats from fireworks, with an emphasis on perchlorate.

While the conclusion of the literature review is that the greatest risk of exposure to the chemical components of fireworks is through inhalation of smoke, the Committee on the Environment supports a thorough study to fill in the many information gaps about the accumulation of toxic chemicals in lake sediments and park soils, uptake by plants and eventual entry into the food chain. The Committee recommended the Madison Dane County Board of Health authorize such a study, but the Board concluded adequate funding for a thorough study was not available.

Because of the Committee's continued interest in this issue, your December 8 letter to Mayor Cieslewicz and accompanying analytical report of metals and perchlorate levels in Lake Mendota following this past summer's Rhythm and Booms was brought to us for discussion at our December 20 meeting. We very much appreciate your efforts to help answer some of the questions that have been raised by citizens and our committee members, but because there is no data to establish a baseline of perchlorate and heavy metal levels in the lake, this new data on its own does not resolve questions about the amount or potential effects of perchlorates and heavy metals entering the lake from fireworks events, especially as the sampling was done a month afterwards. A set of three samples, one set taken immediately before, another immediately after and then another a few weeks after a fireworks event would provide significantly more information

by helping establish baseline levels and estimates of how much enters the lake during an event, as well as how it degrades over time.

Again, the Committee on the Environment applauds your efforts to respond to concerns raised by the public, and please be assured we are not asking you to provide the sampling and analysis suggested above. A meaningful analysis of the short and long term impacts of the deposition and accumulation of the chemical components of fireworks, on the land and water and from years of fireworks in the same location, will require a carefully designed and executed sampling program. We believe such a study should be conducted by the City of Madison and extend beyond Warner Park to the many other local fireworks sites, and we will continue to press for adequate funding to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Grant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lori Grant