



June 6, 2021

Letty Lopez-Viado, Mayor of West Covina

Dario Castellanos, Mayor Pro Tem

Rosario Diaz, Councilwomen

Brian Tabatabai, Councilman

Tony Wu, Councilman

*Via email*

Honorable City Council:

It has come to our attention that the City Council is considering utilizing the West Covina Sportsplex<sup>1</sup> at the BKK Landfills for a city sponsored fireworks display and program for the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Please consider the following before doing so:

The California Department of Fire Protection (Cal Fire) designates fire hazard severity zones within the state of California based on fire likelihood and potential consequences. Cal Fire's highest ranking is a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone or VHFSZ.

There is only one VHFHSZ within the city limits of West Covina. It is the area surrounding the West Covina Sportsplex and the BKK landfills.

Furthermore, both the West Covina City Council and the West Covina Fire Department (WCFD) have indicated the Fire Department is understaffed – under normal circumstances. As they always are, the WCFD will be very busy on July 4<sup>th</sup> as well as the days immediately prior to and after Independence Day. So will all adjacent fire departments.

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<sup>1</sup> Historically the West Covina Sportsplex has also been referred to as Big League Dreams

In addition, the Sportsplex is immediately adjacent to the extensive and active methane wells and piping on the BKK landfills. As you are already aware, fire protection water is highly limited on and around the landfills. Moreover, there is only one exit and entrance to the Sportsplex. Also, the dirt roads on the city owned land at BKK are unmaintained and in sections are now impassable except with four-wheel drive vehicles.

The Sportsplex is also surrounded by State and Federally protected habitat and heavily vegetated City open space. Severe drought conditions have left the habitat and open space tinder dry and ripe for fire.

***In sum, using the Sportsplex for fireworks means doing so within in an area designated as the highest fire severity risk by the State, during a severe drought, without adequate fire protection water or firefighting resources, in area with serious accessibility limitations, surrounded by tinder dry vegetation and protected habitat, which is immediately adjacent to active methane wells and piping as well as housing and businesses.***

Before deciding to have the City's Independence Day fireworks celebration at the West Covina Sportsplex we respectfully ask the City perform a risk and consequence analysis in consultation with the City's insurer.

Thank you,

Brian Jobst  
Co-founder, Livable West Covina

Cc: David Carmany, City Manager  
Paulina Morales, Assistant City Manager  
Helen Tran, Risk Management Director  
Thomas Duarte, City Attorney  
Vincent Capelle, Fire Chief  
CAL FIRE

DTSC  
CalRecycle  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
South Coast Air Quality Management District  
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
City of West Covina Local Enforcement Agency