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American Pyrotechnics Association Urges Congress to Act Now to Preserve the July 4th American Fireworks Tradition

Bethesda, MD, May 27, 2020 – Fireworks are among the most widely anticipated traditions of celebrating our nation's independence. As the Fourth of July holiday rapidly approaches, there are widespread cancellations of community Independence Day celebrations nationwide due to social distancing mandates related to Covid-19. The skies across the vast majority of our great nation will be dark this year, and potentially forever, unless congress provides a lifeline to the fireworks display industry in the next stimulus package.

According to the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA), of the 16,000 Independence Day fireworks displays that typically occur nationwide annually in cities and towns, only a scant few will occur this year. These nationwide cancellations have created significant financial hardship for the small, multi-generational family businesses who derive their livelihood from bringing communities together to celebrate their pride and patriotism on one day a year – Independence Day. "Covid-19 and the necessity for states, cities and townships to implement social distancing mandates has financially devastated the small family businesses who produce fireworks displays for community celebrations," said APA Executive Director, Julie L. Heckman. "Independence Day only comes once per year; there is no do-over for the 4th of July," Heckman added.

Nationwide approximately 150 small family businesses, many of which are multi-generational, comprise the American fireworks display industry. Unlike other small businesses, these businesses are unique because they earn their livelihood from producing fireworks displays for Fourth of July community celebrations. "The fireworks industry is hyper-seasonal and without Independence Day celebrations, these family businesses aren't just losing their bread and butter but rather, their entire livelihood is severely impacted," said Heckman.

The APA is urging Congress to help these small family fireworks display businesses by modifying the current Economic Injury Disaster Loan program offered by the Small Business Administration (SBA) with low interest and forgivable loans to help them bridge the gap of losing more than 80% of their income directly as a result of Covid-19. While we are empathetic to the communities who have faced the tough decision to forego large public gatherings at a time when the country needs something to celebrate, the social distancing mandates have directly caused the widespread cancellation of July 4th fireworks displays and these families are struggling for survival.

The loans available under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) were helpful to many of the small family fireworks display businesses. However, they are only a short-term band aid and are grossly

insufficient to help these family businesses survive until next year when firework displays, large gatherings and community celebrations resume. "These family businesses urgently need help now in order to survive. We hope that congress will take swift action to help our industry like it has helped many other industries," said Heckman.

About the American Pyrotechnics Association
The APA is the leading safety and trade association of the fireworks industry representing manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers, suppliers, and professional display companies. Founded in 1948, APA's mission is to encourage safety in the design and use of all types of fireworks, to provide industry information and support to its members, and to promote responsible regulation of the fireworks industry. Additional information about the fireworks industry can be found on APA's website at http://www.americanpyro.com

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