

Responses to Concerns Raised about the Proposed “Temporary Burn Ban on All Outdoor Burning in Times of High Fire Danger” at May 27 Public Safety meeting

-This is a “blanket ban”. It is temporary ban in times of HIGH FIRE DANGER as designated by the NYSDEC fire danger map:

<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/wildfires/fire-danger-map>

(The DEC definition of “high fire danger” is: “All fine dead fuels ignite readily and fires start easily from most causes. Unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape. Fires spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. High-intensity burning may develop on slopes or in concentrations of fine fuels. Fires may become serious and their control difficult unless they are attacked successfully while small.”)

-That this would not solve a problem, but would “punish people”. The GOAL is to be proactive, eliminate sources of ignition, and protect the city of Kingston’s residents from the risk of fire during times when that risk is HIGH.

-People will break the law, so there is no need to have one. All public safety depends on enacting laws that, drawing from the best available science and information, seek to be proactive, such as speed limit laws. These also rely on people recognizing the danger, and that there will be penalties for non-compliance.

-The laws we have in place are sufficient. Climate conditions are worsening such that the Hudson Valley and Ulster County experienced extreme wildfires in November of 2024, and high fire danger designations are seen more often in Kingston outside of the traditionally-observed period of mid-March to mid-May.

-Everything is not solved by banning firepits. This proposal does not seek to ban firepits; simply to eliminate risks in times of high fire danger.

-Does not create a resilient community, just a more suspicious one. Resilience means adapting to changing climate times, and making informed policy decisions intended to meet the demands of emerging science on climate conditions. The safety of the entire community of Kingston depends on taking appropriate measures to reduce risk. This is about protecting everyone.

-While supportive of the idea that people should call the FD if they see a spark, it is not clear how having this proposed temporary burn ban would expand enforcement. This proposal seeks to prevent the scenario in which the capacity of the

Kingston FDs would be **severely** tested (with potentially disastrous effects nevertheless).

-FD has no extra staff to respond to non-emergency calls. The intention of this proposal is to PREVENT a potential, out-of-control fire emergency.

-It is common sense not to start a fire when there is a drought. We don't need a ban in place. As several members mentioned that people do/will choose to burn even when there is high wind, or even if there is a law in place, why would we NOT enact one in order to do all we can as a community to protect our residents?

-The FD can get to any fires within 3 minutes because they have in the past. The data from the DEC Fire Danger history 2013-2025 indicate that climate conditions are dramatically changing in the last 4 years (as also evidenced by the unprecedented wildfires in Ulster County in November, 2024). The Altadena FDs (two of them) are also paid departments, and once sparks led to fire, it spread so rapidly from house to house due to winds (part of DEC's formula for fire rating) that it was impossible to extinguish.