

Press



Release

11 New Hempstead Road, New City, NY (845) 638-5100 Fax: (845) 638-5675 e-mail legclerk@co.rockland.ny.us.

For Immediate Release

Contact: **Hon. Alden H. Wolfe, Chairman** **(845) 638-5269**
 Hon. Christopher J. Carey, Minority Leader **(845) 638-5754**
 Laura Incalcaterra, Community Relations Coordinator (845) 638-5184

Wolfe & Carey: Sparkler Law Can Boost Public Safety, Keep Sales Tax Revenue In Rockland

Rockland County Legislature votes to allow use and sales of some
consumer-grade fireworks

New City, NY (Sept. 2, 2015) – The Rockland County Legislature voted 13-2 Tuesday to allow the limited sales of sparklers around the July 4th and New Year's Day holidays.

Rockland has now joined more than 30 of New York's 62 counties in allowing the use and sales of some small consumer-grade fireworks. New York is among 47 states allowing such sales, to both encourage public safety and retain local sales tax dollars.

In February, the local bill's sponsors, Legislature Chairman Alden H. Wolfe and Legislature Minority Leader Christopher J. Carey, asked for input from local firefighters.

In March, the county Office of Fire and Emergency Services informed the Legislators that after reaching out to firefighters and fire inspectors, the office had no concerns with the local law.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo had earlier signed legislation permitting the use and sales of certain fireworks if municipalities opted to allow it.

The rules limit the sales period to June 1 through July 5 and Dec. 26 through Jan. 2. Retailers must be state licensed and use and sales are limited to those over the age of 18.

The new Rockland County law allows local use and sales of sparklers with wooden handles, fountains that shower colored sparks and sometimes have smoke and whistling effects, and novelties such as party poppers, snakes and wolf snaps.

The state estimates that New York could collect \$2 million in tax revenue on sparkler sales this year.

Wolfe said it is his hope that the new law will provide an additional commodity for local retailers while also eliminating the need for local residents to travel out of the area for sparklers, including trips to nearby Pennsylvania where explosive devices are permitted to be sold.

“If you go to Pennsylvania to buy sparklers you may come back with M-80s, Roman candles and bottle rockets,” Wolfe said. “That’s precisely what we don’t want to happen. If our surrounding counties have already legalized safe sparklers, I would rather folks not go to Orange County to buy them. I’d rather they buy them right here in Rockland County.”

Carey said there were safety concerns, but that experts have said local law or not, people are going to use sparklers and similar consumer-grade devices.

“So from an economic standpoint, rather than have folks here in Rockland go up to Monroe and have their sales tax go to Orange County, I would like to keep those dollars here,” Carey said. “I do understand there’s safety risks involved. I do think this is a good opportunity, one of the few that we have, to put some money in our pockets.”

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