Statement on Environmental Noise Pollution in Appleton

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To the Mayor and Members of the Appleton Common Council:

I am submitting this statement regarding the significant and preventable health hazards posed by chronic environmental noise pollution on College Avenue and surrounding residential streets. As a physician specializing in Occupational and Environmental Medicine with a Master's degree in Public Health, I frame this issue not as a mere nuisance, but as a public health imperative.

The Health Case Against Chronic Noise Exposure

Scientific literature consistently identifies chronic exposure to environmental noise as a serious threat to public health. The physiological impacts are well-documented:

- **Cardiovascular Health:** Noise exposure triggers the sympathetic-adrenal axis, increasing stress hormones (cortisol) and inducing chronic hypertension. This elevates the risk of ischemic heart disease, myocardial infarction, and stroke.
- **Mental Health and Cognition:** Excessive noise is linked to heightened levels of anxiety, psychological distress, and impaired cognitive function in both adults and children.
- **Sleep Disruption:** Noise-induced sleep fragmentation compromises immune function and long-term metabolic health.

Proposed Actions

Acknowledging existing constraints regarding state law and enforcement, I urge the Council to take the following steps to protect the health of our residents:

1. **Transparent Enforcement Reporting:** Require the Traffic Safety Unit to provide regular, public reporting on citations issued specifically for exhaust system violations.

2. **Targeted Public Awareness:** Implement an educational campaign to clarify the legal definition of an "adequate muffler" and the consequences of intentional noise amplification.
3. **Policy Advocacy:** Work with state representatives to bridge the gap between our local need for a quieter environment and current limitations on enforcing "noise-only" violations.

Selected References

- Basner M, et al. "Auditory and non-auditory effects of noise on health." *The Lancet*, 2014.
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- Munzel T, et al. "Environmental Noise and the Cardiovascular System." *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, 2018.
- Clark C, Stansfeld SA. "The effect of transportation noise on health and cognitive development: a review of recent evidence." *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 2007.