

From: [Rose Lewis](#)
To: [Exhibits JTPUFR](#)
Subject: Testimony for the hearing on July 17
Date: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 12:26:31 PM

To the Joint Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform:

Thank you for your work in addressing the ongoing crisis of police violence. I am grateful to have this opportunity to testify.

The use of tear gas by law enforcement has been excessive in the extreme, even after the recent court order restraining Portland police from using it under most circumstances. By its very nature, tear gas is an indiscriminate weapon. A single canister can spread for up to a quarter mile, exposing potentially dozens of Portlanders to its noxious effects. The events of June 30 are particularly egregious, as tear gas seeped from the site where it was deployed into the homes, vehicles, and businesses of peaceful Portlanders not participating in the targeted protest. OHSU's Dr. Anita Randolph has researched its dangers and emphasizes that contamination of one's home poses risks for illness. I have loved ones with asthma who could be very seriously harmed or even killed by this type of passive exposure.

Tear gas was also deployed in response to an arson incident on June 26. Multiple people present at the scene felt that police use of tear gas made it more difficult to safely evacuate. People should not be gassed while trying to escape a fire.

There is insufficient evidence to conclude that exposure to tear gas is safe. Considerable research suggests that it poses serious risks to the lungs, liver, and reproductive system. The coughing it induces could contribute to the spread of COVID-19, making its use during a respiratory pandemic especially unsafe.

Numerous peaceful protesters, myself included, have taken every opportunity to contact our elected officials and the police chief asking for a total cessation of its use. City Commissioners Jo Ann Hardesty and Chloe Eudaly have both expressed public support for a total ban, and I am very grateful for their leadership on this issue. I also commend House Speaker Tina Kotek for her letter to Portland officials regarding its use on June 30. I find the lack of support for a total ban from our Mayor, Police Chief, and the Commissioner in charge of Portland's Office of Equity and Human Rights to be deeply troubling. The Mayor has called for an end to violence in Portland without sufficiently acknowledging the violent behavior of police or agreeing to totally ban one of their most indiscriminately violent weapons. This shows a serious lack of regard for public safety.

Thank you for your time.
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