

Dear member of the Joint Legislative Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform -

I am writing in support of HB 4208 to ban the use of tear gas by police. I am a resident of Portland, Oregon staying tuned to the news of recent protests and police response to the Black Lives Matter actions in my city. Although they are under order limiting use of tear gas to situations where lives of police officers are at risk the Portland Police recently used tear gas and rubber bullets (June 24 evening) to disperse protestors from near the Justice Center. Court documents of these incidents show that this was indiscriminate use of chemical agents where no one provoked the police, no one threw anything at the police, nor were their lives at risk.

Reasons to ban the use of this gas include: Chlorobenzylidene malononitrile (CS) has transient as well as lasting severe and sometimes life threatening effects on skin, respiratory systems, and eyes. There have been documented harms to demonstrators, bystanders, and secondarily-exposed health care workers due to the use of CS gas as a “riot control” agent.

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