

Honorable Representatives and Senators,

PLEASE REMOVE ANY EXEMPTIONS in HB 4208 to the use of tear gas by law enforcement. The use of tear gas by law enforcement must be banned without exception.

Tear gas, banned for warfare since 1925, has no place on our streets.

And yet, it is one of the most extensively used “riot control” agents.

Tear gas has transient and lasting severe, and sometimes life-threatening, effects on skin, respiratory systems, and eyes. Police, demonstrators, bystanders, and secondarily-exposed health care workers have been harmed by exposure to tear gas.

People with underlying health conditions such as asthma or COPD are at risk of serious life-threatening illness if exposed to these toxic gases. One in ten people in Oregon has asthma. This rate is even higher in urban areas.

And this is certainly exacerbated by the fact that we are currently in the middle of a respiratory disease pandemic. In any case, it is excessively reckless to expose people in a crowd to lung irritants. Now more so than ever.

**Tear gas has no place in our streets under any circumstances. It’s use must be banned completely.**

The American Public Health Association’s has concluded that police violence and racism are public health crises. I urge you to listen to the voices of Black community leaders and their supporters who are calling on legislators to fundamentally transform our systems of public safety.

The use of tear gas as a crowd control measure IS NOT SAFE and must be ceased completely.

Thank you,

Katharine Salzmann

Oregon