

Co-Chairs Bynum, Manning, and other respected committee members,

I am writing to express my grave disappointment that LC 17 no longer includes a complete ban on the use of CS gas by police. As I stated when expressing support for LC 742, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that CS gas is safe to use. The largest available study on the long-term effects of CS gas, conducted on military recruits exposed to this weapon while training, showed that even one exposure increased lifetime vulnerability to respiratory illness. Other evidence suggests a link between exposure to CS gas and a host of reproductive complications, including miscarriage. It is detrimental to the health of all involved: the officers using the gas, the members of the public targeted by the gas, and anyone else within the roughly quarter mile over which the gas can spread. Ample testimony presented to this committee during hearings in July demonstrates that CS gas is a truly indiscriminate weapon, capable of seeping well beyond the site at which it is deployed to contaminate the homes, cars, and businesses of people not participating in the targeted crime. I found Brendan Deiz's account of CS gas contaminating his air conditioner to be particularly chilling, and am disappointed that this information has insufficiently swayed lawmakers. This substance is illegal in international warfare and should be illegal for domestic use as well.

I would like to express my support for LC 18. The reforms contained in this legislative concept are vital and clear. I am especially grateful that it closes the current bizarre loophole wherein members of the public seeking to identify an officer based on badge number must also provide the officer's name, precisely the piece of information being sought. LC 18 is an important step towards transparency and fairness.

Thank you for your thoughtful efforts in developing these legislative concepts. I hope that a complete ban on the use of CS gas will reenter the conversation. It is urgently needed.

Best wishes,

Rosalind Lewis, concerned Portland resident