

I am writing to ask you to ban the use of tear gas, chemical irritants and impact munitions by police in our communities. I have been dismayed by the police response to protests in Portland. Particularly as it relates to the use of force. It makes no one safer, it deters nothing, and is primed to continue escalating violence. It must stop now!

I would like to share my experience living down the block from the Penumbra Kelly Building in East Portland. In general we saw a lot of strange and expensive policing. Flashbangs going off outside our duplex, police riding on the outside of riot vans like Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Cosplayers. The police also took to making protests less safe by towing cars and removing flaggers that would help direct drivers around from the protest. It became clear that the police interest was in no way public safety around my house. It was only in expressing power and punishing those who challenged it.

One night in particular, August 2nd to be exact, my wife, dog and I were all teargassed awake at 11:50 pm. We were aware of the protest at the Penumbra Kelly building, but we were not participating. We generally go to bed by 10:30 on work nights, but I don't know exactly when we went to sleep on the 3rd. Our bedroom was on the second floor of our house and has windows that face Burnside. The temperature was hot enough that day that we had a window fan running to pull in air that was cooler outside after the sun went down. We both woke up coughing and with burning eyes at about 11:50pm. Our dog sleeps in the hallway outside our room and was barking and in distress too. My wife went to the window and I went to calm our dog down and make sure that she was okay. Our neighbor was watching out the window and says tear gas has gotten into their house on other occasions.

We think that this was an excessive use of force. We don't know what was happening outside, but we were able to sleep through it. Over the next week, I called a lot of numbers with PPB to find out what we were gassed with and was just passed around with no one willing to identify the gas they used. The most helpful officer worked in the Armory and he told me not to worry as he had been gassed thousands of times.

Make our communities safer. Ban these weapons.

Thanks,  
Matt