

Dear Elected Officials,

I am writing in **support of HB 2928** and strongly urge you to support any and all efforts to regulate the use of chemical incapacitants, kinetic impact projectiles, and sound devices by law enforcement agencies. I request that you and your fellow lawmakers leverage any and all avenues to **halt the current and future use of chemical weapons** against civilians.

The use of chemical weapons (such as tear gas and munition smoke) indiscriminately exposes non-consenting populations of people, peaceful or otherwise, to unknown levels of toxic materials as well as negatively impacting the environment with short and long-term consequences for both.

By their very nature, chemical weapons include compounds designed to interact with components of their environment, including humans. First and foremost, these chemical agents should not even be in existence for use against citizens but have been allowed to remain legal over the last century due to loose legal classification and United Nations texts that did not cover at length which gasses ought to be banned after the Geneva Convention of 1925 banned the use of tear gas and categorized it as a chemical warfare agent. These fundamentally reactive compounds significantly impact human health and well-being in the short and long-term¹. There are several lawsuits² in progress across the nation after the summer of 2020's historic social justice protests, and for good reason, as they have detrimental effects on human health including inciting severe respiratory events, gastrointestinal issues, abnormal changes to menstruation (with effects yet to be determined and currently being called upon to investigate³), and eliciting extreme mental distress and PTSD. However, these chemical agents' impacts are not limited to just humans and can have significant ecological consequences⁴. Additionally, disbursement of many of these compounds into the environment without remediation constitutes illegal disposal of hazardous wastes under the Environmental Protection Act⁵.

First-hand accounts and collected munitions indicate that such weapons are often deployed without regard to explicitly labeled disbursement requirements, such as "use only outdoors⁶", "use from at least a minimal safe distance⁷", and "use only within 5 years of the manufacture date⁸". Using chemical weapons in such situations puts human lives at significant risk. These are all things that were done against people exercising their constitutional right to the 1st amendment but did not stop to also affect innocent and unsuspecting families who could not escape the effects of chemicals seeping into their homes throughout the summer^{9,10}. Indiscriminate use of chemical agents by the Portland Police Bureau continued, despite a federal judge granting a restraining order on the chemical agent through July 24 except in life-threatening circumstances, and the Oregon Legislature passing a bill that nominally restricted its use.

Presently, however, law enforcement is functionally allowed to use chemical weapons against civilians without consequence¹¹. Further, private industry is allowed to manufacture munitions¹² for law enforcement using known aquatic toxins and probable human carcinogens, while providing incomplete documentation of components and risks. Given the obfuscation of components, indiscriminate nature, and reactivity of chemical weapons, victims of their impacts are not able to readily obtain information about what weapons were used and in what condition they were deployed. Instead, they are forced to first identify the chemicals used on them via forensics and then determine their consequences. Even if indications are strong that the chemicals are more noxious than law enforcement states, including carcinogenicity, agencies can continue to use the chemical weapons until they are **proven toxic**.

The use of this “assumed safe” loophole as a tactical approach against protesters amounts to chemical experimentation on American civilians. Given that the recipient population (including bystanders) is not able to determine fundamentally how it is impacted by the munitions and individuals may not be able to leave areas made unsafe, the use of chemical weapons by any state against its people should be considered an act of warfare or domestic terrorism.

As a healthcare provider who serves to protect the humans I work for on a daily basis, and as a youth climate justice activist who seeks to advocate on the behalf of oppressed and marginalized communities as well as the welfare of the environment, I feel it prudent that you all as lawmakers should use every resource possible to do the same and uphold your duties to us citizens from such apparent harm allowed upon us by federal, state and municipal police agencies.

Not only should you support this bill but you should also advocate for the following:

1. A complete moratorium on chemical weapons being used on humans in the United States.
2. Full dismantling and proper disposal of law enforcement chemical weapons caches.
3. The legal default being set such that a chemical is not to be used and evidence must be provided of its safety before base consideration (“assumed toxic”).
4. Potential chemical weapons must undergo the same review as chemicals involved in agricultural applications.
5. They must also undergo a further review to specifically address use *against* humans.

Swiftly enacting these measures and upholding HB 2928 will help save human life and suffering, reduce negative impacts on the environment, and counter-act fascism.

With best regards,

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