

February 27, 2012

To Mayor Sam Adams, Police Chief Mike Reese and the people of Portland,

On February 29th, concerned residents, students, and occupiers in Portland and over seventy cities across the nation will take action against corporations and legislators involved in the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). On this day Portlanders will exercise their rights and act collectively to challenge corporate power, social injustice and environmental destruction. We have consistently stated that these demonstrations will be nonviolent, as has every demonstration that has occurred during the existence of Occupy Portland. **Nonviolent demonstrations should be met with nonviolence.**

On February 22nd, two representatives from the Portland Action Lab, the direct action spokescouncil organizing as part of Occupy Portland, met with the Mayor's office. Brenna Bell and David Osborn met with Clay Neal, Acting Director, Public Safety and Peacekeeping, and Grace Uwagbae, the Mayor's Community Advocate. We reiterated that for February 29th we have planned nonviolent actions, something that has been frequently and publicly stated. We also communicated our concerns about inappropriate crowd control policies of the Portland Police Bureau and the possibility of police violence on February 29th.

These concerns are based in the unfortunate history of the Portland Police Bureau responding violently to nonviolent demonstrations. Several notable incidents since 2000 include:

- **May 1, 2000** – Police deployed batons, ATVs, horses, beanbag rounds and pepper spray against participants in the annual May Day workers' rally in downtown Portland.
- **August 22, 2002** - Portland police deployed pepper spray, batons and rubber bullets against demonstrators assembled to protest President George W. Bush's attendance at a Republican fundraiser in downtown Portland. The spray reached several children in the crowd, including a 10-month-old and a 3-year-old, as well as members of the Independent Police Review division, the city office charged with police oversight.
- **October 5, 2006** - At the World Can't Wait demonstration in downtown Portland police officers deployed rubber bullets, pepper spray, horses and batons against protesters.
- **March 18, 2007** - During protests against the Iraq War, police inflicted pepper spray, horses and batons against demonstrators once again.

During this time frame, we have also witnessed the increasing militarization of the police force, which creates a further gap between the heavily armored police, and the people of Portland who are working together to create a better world (which sometimes, necessarily, involves breaking the law, as have so many before us).

Over the course of the Occupy Movement the police have continued this pattern of militaristic and aggressive behavior. In particular, during the "Occupy the Banks" action on November 17th, also organized by the Portland Action Lab, the police attacked crowds of nonviolent demonstrators exercising their rights. In the late afternoon there were multiple confirmed reports of injuries from medical and legal teams. Over twelve instances of pepper spray at point blank range targeting people on the sidewalk were documented. Two people were stepped on and pushed down by police horses. At least six people were beaten with batons by the police. Seven people were injured from impacts with police bicycles. One individual suffered an injured back after being forcefully grabbed by a mounted officer. One elderly person was taken to the hospital with serious injuries.

During our meeting with the Mayor's office we reiterated that the Portland Police Bureau should respond nonviolently to nonviolent protests. We asked the representatives of the Mayor to communicate this to the Portland Police Bureau. We stated that given the loss of trust between the police and Occupy Portland we did not believe speaking to the police would be fruitful, and that we believed it was time for the Mayor to hold the police force accountable for its violent and aggressive actions toward nonviolent actors. In good faith and in order to facilitate communication on the day of action we will have a police liaison who will serve as a conduit for information between the people participating in the actions and the police.

Nonviolent demonstrations should be met with nonviolence. We call on the Mayor to exercise his authority over the Portland Police Bureau to ensure that this transpires on February 29th. We call on the people of Portland to hold both the Portland Police Bureau and the Mayor accountable if the police, again, use violence unnecessarily and unjustly on those peacefully assembled participants in Wednesday's day of action.

For a Better World,

Brenna Bell and David Osborn for the Portland Action Lab