

Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



Homeland
Security

August 31, 2020

Mayor Ted Wheeler
1221 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 340
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Mayor Wheeler:

I have received your letter addressed to President Trump dated August 28, 2020. The President asked that I respond on his behalf.

You state in your letter that “[t]here is no place for looting, arson, or vandalism in our city.” Unfortunately, you have failed to back up that sentiment with any action. In fact, your inaction has fostered an environment that has fueled senseless violence and destruction night after night. For more than three months, Portland has become the epicenter of crime and chaos, with rioters attacking government buildings with the intention of burning them to the ground. As of today, since July 31, 2020, there have been 255 arrests made by local law enforcement and 23 riots and unlawful assemblies declared. Despite this, you have stood by passively, arguing that the nightly violence “will ultimately *burn itself out*.” The evidence demonstrates otherwise.

Due to a lack of action throughout the summer, Portland and its law-abiding residents continue to suffer from large-scale looting, arson, and vandalism—even killing. Businesses remain shuttered and Portlanders are held hostage by the daily violence that has gripped the city with no end in sight. This is precisely why President Trump has—and continues to—offer federal law enforcement assistance to Portland. And that is why I, in my capacity as the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, was not only authorized, but statutorily *obligated*, to protect federal property and persons on that property.

With your letter you included a YouTube video in which your television interviewer attested that “there was more unrest in [Portland] last night. Portland police declared a riot, saying that protestors [*sic*] broke into the Police Association building, the union, and lit it on fire.” That same YouTube video contained chilling footage of the arson that was terrorizing your city; and it was perpetrated by rioters, not by peaceful protesters. The chaos, destruction, and suffering in Portland are evils you can stop—and must stop. Consider what happened recently in Wisconsin—where the State of Wisconsin requested and received federal law enforcement assistance and the violence and looting there ended.

I hope you honor your commitment that “[t]hose who commit criminal acts will be apprehended and prosecuted under the law.” To that end, I encourage you to work with and disabuse the District Attorney of Multnomah County of his refusal to prosecute individuals who have committed such crimes as: interference with a law enforcement officer, rioting, criminal trespass, second-degree disorderly conduct, escape, or a city ordinance violation. In short, ignoring criminal

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behavior is no way to protect the citizens of your community, the same citizens who entrusted you to hold elected office. We hope and expect that fairness and good judgment will prevail in Portland.

Accordingly, I urge you to prioritize public safety and to request federal assistance to restore law and order in Portland. We are standing by to support Portland. At the same time, President Trump has made it abundantly clear that there will come a point when state and local officials fail to protect its citizens from violence, the federal government will have no choice but to protect our American citizens.

DHS remains wholly committed to ensuring the rights of peaceful protesters and conducts all activities in full compliance with the Constitution and federal law. I am proud of our brave and selfless officers and of our federal, state, and local partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad F. Wolf". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary