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### **Thousands of Portlanders Call for Facial Recognition Ban** Coalition of Non-Profits Joins Fight Against City-Wide Surveillance

Portland, OR — Thousands of Portlanders and a coalition of non-profit groups have joined together to urge the City of Portland to ban facial recognition.

“Facial recognition technology is uniquely dangerous because it can be used from a distance without a person ever even knowing their image was captured.” said Chris Bushick, founder of PDX Privacy, a Portland-based privacy organization. “The use of this technology allows us to be tracked wherever we go, potentially linking our faces to our every movement, purchase, and interaction with others. It also has accuracy issues that primarily affect people of color, thereby entrenching already systemic race issues.”

The City of Portland is considering two separate facial recognition ban bills at a hearing on September 9th—one to ban use of facial recognition by public agencies, and another to ban use by private entities.

In a letter sent to Portland City Council, PDX Privacy joined a coalition of thirty-nine<sup>1</sup> civil society organizations in calling for an end to government use of face surveillance technology.

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<sup>1</sup> A Legacy of Equality, Leadership and Organizing (LELO), ACLU of Oregon, Advocacy for Principled Action in Government, Alliance for Democracy, Portland, BerniePDX, Center for Human Rights and Privacy, Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism, Corvallis chapter Constitutional Alliance, Council on American-Islamic Relations - Oregon, Cryptoparty Ann Arbor, Data Privacy Group of Lewis & Clark Law School, Defending Rights & Dissent, Don't Shoot Portland, EFA Cedar Rapids Affiliate, Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), Ethics In Technology, Fight for the Future, Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice, Media Alliance, National Lawyers Guild - Portland, Oakland Privacy, OpenMedia, PDX Privacy, Personal Telco Project, Portland Central America Solidarity Committee (PCASC), Portland Tenants United, Portland United Against Hate, Portland-Metro People's Coalition, Portland's Techno-Activism 3rd Mondays, Privacy Times, Project Waves, Restore The Fourth, S.T.O.P. - Surveillance Technology Oversight Project, Secure Justice, Students Against Data Abuse, TechActivist, Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Washington Defender Association, and Whatcom Peace and Justice Center

They also sent a petition that was signed by more than 150 Portland residents, including workers, parents, business owners, and technologists.

Nathan Sheard, EFF's Associate Director of Community Organizing, explains, "The threat to essential liberties extends far beyond political rallies. Images captured outside houses of worship, medical facilities, schools, community centers, or homes could reveal familial, political, religious, and sexual partnerships. This threat is heightened by the disturbing record of law enforcement agencies and their subcontractors failing to securely maintain sensitive personal information. We can replace our social security number or driver's license, we can't apply for a new face."

In a second letter to Portland City Council, PDX Privacy joined a coalition of sixteen<sup>2</sup> civil society organizations to ban use of facial recognition by private entities. They also sent another petition, signed by more than 1,200 Portlanders, that included comments made by signatories.

"Business groups want to use facial recognition on customers and passersby in order to expand the dystopian surveillance systems they already use to manipulate people online," said Lia Holland (she/her), a Portland resident and activist with digital rights group Fight for the Future. "We cannot allow Portland to turn into a real life Facebook, where nudges to extremism or consumerism are forced into the fabric of our everyday lives without our knowledge or consent. These companies are drooling to exploit our habits, routines, appearances, associations, and all the personal details only facial recognition could unlock."

While other cities have passed facial recognition bans that focus on government agencies, Bushick says that "passing both bills this week is Portland's opportunity to lead the nation in ensuring that technologies being implemented actually work in the interest of the public—and especially front-line communities—rather than treating residents as sources of data that can be used to increase market share."

For EFF's Portland petition:  
[aboutfacenow.org/portland-or](https://aboutfacenow.org/portland-or)

Fight for the Future's Portland petition:  
<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/ban-facial-recognition-from-portland/>

For the public ban letter to Portland City Council:  
<https://www.portlandmaps.com/bps/testimony/item.cfm#itemID=185506>

For the private ban letter to Portland City Council:  
<https://www.portlandmaps.com/bps/testimony/item.cfm#itemID=185505>

For more about the About Face campaign:  
[aboutfacenow.org](https://aboutfacenow.org)

For more about Fight for the Future's campaign to ban facial recognition:  
<https://www.banfacialrecognition.com/>

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<sup>2</sup> Constitutional Alliance, Council on American-Islamic Relations - Oregon, Cryptoparty Ann Arbor, Data Privacy Group of Lewis & Clark Law School, Defending Rights & Dissent, Don't Shoot Portland, Fight for the Future, Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice, Media Alliance, Oakland Privacy, OpenMedia, PDX Privacy, Portland United Against Hate, Portland's Techno-Activism 3rd Mondays, Privacy Times, and Restore The Fourth