

Writing to the Mayor of London - Example Letter

Email: enquiries@mopac.london.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing with great concern about the actions of the Metropolitan Police last night and more generally across the whole of this round of Extinction Rebellion protests. From the start of this action, the Metropolitan Police have tried to dissuade people from joining these peaceful protests, aimed at pushing the government to take critical action to prevent the climate catastrophe which has already started. Statements put out that appear intentionally vague or designed to deter people from joining the protests, have included:

1. A written threat in advance of the protests citing Coronavirus regulations that did not apply to their action
2. A notice issued on the eve of Rebellion that appeared to effectively ban protest across London. Following a legal challenge by Extinction Rebellion lawyers, the Met backed down, blaming a misunderstanding
3. A threat to impound the lightship "Greta" under conspiracy laws

There have also been reports of disproportionate and aggressive arrests, and let's not forget that Extinction Rebellion was of course infamously included on a list of extremist ideologies under the Prevent programme.

Last night on Lambeth Bridge, a critical mass of around 200 cyclists were kettled by the police, leaving them unable to get out, and they were then rounded up and arrested en masse. Their bicycles were also confiscated. This is a misuse of police power and is clearly illegal.

This action has clear echoes of a 2012 protest when 182 protestors were arrested for supposedly straying too close to the Olympic Park. This was also found to be illegal and the police were eventually forced to compensate everyone who came forward afterwards. Extinction Rebellion's successful Judicial Review against the Met's policing of their October Rebellion last year cost the public tens of thousands of pounds – in processing illegal arrests and High Court costs – and exposed it to further costly false imprisonment claims.

The Extinction Rebellion Legal team is working on a case for those arrested last night and when it is found to be illegal, once again tens of thousands of pounds of taxpayer money will be spent compensating those that were arrested. Is this a good use of public funds, stemming as it does from an entirely avoidable and illegal action by the police?

The legal right to protest is enshrined in the British constitution and I urge you to urgently ensure that the Metropolitan Police stop trying to shut these protests down and instead fulfil their role of protecting the right to free assembly.

Many thanks for your time, I look forward to your reply with interest, hoping that will be soon given the urgency of the matter.

Sincerely,
