

January 15, 2018

King Neighborhood Association
4815 NE 7th Avenue
Portland, OR 97211

Dan Dhruva
General Manager
Pacific Outdoor Advertising
715 NE Everett St
Portland, OR 97232

Dear Mr. Dhruva:

We are writing to strongly object to your billboards recently posted around northeast Portland that express a hateful racist message.

These billboards promote Dr. Martens boots, and show a pair of such boots with the tagline “Rock the Holidays” (for example, your billboard #090209 on Sandy Boulevard).

What you may not be aware of is the fact that the red bootlaces on the boots pictured on your billboards are the racist skinhead symbol that the wearer has violently attacked people of color (see the Southern Poverty Law Center’s on-line guide to skinheads at www.splcenter.org/20120625/racist-skinheads-understanding-threat).

According to the SPLC’s “Racist Skinhead Glossary”: “Racist skinheads will often randomly attack non-whites to ‘earn’ their red laces.” Consequently, your billboards are offensive to us, our neighbors and our neighborhood. Surely you would not let your billboards portray the burning crosses of the Ku Klux Klan, yet the Dr. Martens display is simply a more subtle communication of a similar message.

King neighborhood is home to one of the highest proportions of black residents in the entire state of Oregon—and our neighborhood itself is named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We call upon you to post apologies for these billboards at the very same sites at which the offending images appeared, and we hope you will publicly disavow the racist message that the offending images conveyed.

Sincerely,

King Neighborhood Association