

July 11, 2025

**RE: Please oppose bill 19-25 watering down wonderful phase out of gas leafblowers**

Dear County Council:

In thinking about what to write about this dismaying attempt to partially rollback the long overdue phase out of gas powered leafblowers, I was tempted to note all the obvious arguments -- the more than 7,000 residents who for years asked for this change, unbearable endless neighborhood-rattling noise, embarrassingly outdated technology with more than adequate cleaner/quieter/affordable alternatives, the impact on some of the most voiceless often minority workers being asked to lug these ear splitting/pollution-belching machines on their backs every day (at whose benefit exactly?), the two year transition period that included hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer-funded assistance, and other near and far areas that long ago made this switch with lawns still being tended, landscapers still working, and quality of life for residents and workers improved....but last week as the new law took effect, something marvelous changed my mind on what to emphasize.

Our family was up early. I was having breakfast before work with our kids and my wife took an early work call outside on our small patio. A sizeable landscaping company pulled up to tend to a neighbor's yard and we all braced (based on more than a decade of experience) for the disruptive, ear (and wall) piercing noise, and the ensuing stress of waiting for it to end. But after mowing, the worker grabbed a new portable electric blower and finished so quietly we didn't even notice. My wife continued her call outside instead of scrambling inside. And the worker wasn't exposed to noise and two stroke engine fumes. A bit later walking to the subway, I passed a much smaller landscaping operation with the same wonderful experience. We could stay on the sidewalk and not be overpowered by noise more than a block away and the workers had cleaner quieter equipment. What a change in just the first week...one I have heard happily repeated now from others in the county. What a gift you gave residents and workers with this phased in law....and that the county helped these companies with the shift is a win win for all.

Why in the world would we go backwards on this great quality of life and worker health move? What is it about hundred year old two stroke gas leafblower technology that some on this council seem to think needs such special protection (should we also get rid of mufflers too??). Let's be honest, this change has been coming and demanded for some time. DC and several incorporated MoCo jurisdictions already had them in place for years (with some using the new technology in those areas then absurdly using the old equipment next door in MoCo). And as ironically noted in the County Council write up for the proposed watering down of the new law, the *"exemption does not extend to weekends to ensure County residents are not disturbed while at home"* .... therefore acknowledging that for the other times we all would in fact all be disturbed. No doubt this is of little comfort to county residents who are retired, home with young kids, or working irregular shifts (or trying to eat dinner or walk in one's neighborhood given the exemption until 8pm on weekdays).

This was a great win very popular with voters. There was compromise time for change, substantial taxpayer help (and county outreach) for the transition, and a win for quality of life, worker health, and the environment. Let it continue. With every passing day it will be even more popular and common sense.

Thank you,

Chris Homan  
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