

## **Testimony by Friends of Sligo Creek**

### **On: Expedited Bill 19-25, Noise Control - Leaf Removal Equipment - Seasonal Exemption**

#### **Montgomery County Maryland**

My name is Kit Gage, I've lived in Montgomery County for over 40 years, and am Advocacy Director of Friends of Sligo Creek, and a Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional.

Starting with a joke that's not a joke: My husband suggested I just play the sound of a gas blower at normal volume, then give my testimony and see if you could hear it. ..Perhaps not.

- In my more than 40 years working on legislative matters, national and local, I've never seen a more universally popular bill than the gas blower ban. Everyone I've talked with before and after passage, including landscape workers using gas blowers, has been in favor of switching to electric.
- From a Noise perspective: Montgomery County prides itself on nurturing its workers – particularly those new to the country, people with English as a second language, folks relatively disempowered – these are the people affected most by this amendment - at serious risk of hearing loss. They benefit not one whit if during the highest blower use time period, they end up having to use gas blowers. Is there money in this amendment to pay for hearing aids?
- People actually using the blowers are least empowered and not familiar with its systems or aware they are allowed to affect them. They are unlikely to risk their jobs to ask even for hearing protection. Why would Montgomery County not focus on helping them rather than continuing their bad work environment? We must speak up for them.

- From an Environmental and Climate perspective, we should be seeking to limit the use of blowers in general, but particularly dirty, noisy gas blowers. We should be consistent – the Leave the Leaves movement endorsed by MoCo government means don't blow them and all the accompanying byproducts of inefficient internal combustion engines and particulates around, to be inhaled and ingested by workers, children, and everyone else. There can be reasons to move leaves around, but minimize that activity and do it safely.
- Friends of Sligo Creek helped initiate and promote the original bill. We have received accolades from around the county and country for our work.
- This amendment would gut the original bill, allowing gas blowers during the main time of year of their use.
- Don't pretend to support the law when by supporting this amendment; you would gut it.

Thank you.