

Dear Montgomery County Council,

As a resident of Montgomery County and the City of Rockville, I strongly encourage the Montgomery County Council to reject the recently proposed bill that would exempt professional lawn service companies from the 2023 Montgomery County law banning the use and sale of gas-powered leaf blowers.

The exemption would defeat the purpose of the law by allowing the most prolific users an additional three years to comply. Professional lawn companies have had almost two years (Sep 2023 to Jun 2025) to comply with the original ban. They also have had access to taxpayer-funded rebates of up to \$1,500 per year for smaller companies (under \$250k annual revenue and with five or fewer employees) and up to \$1,000 per year for higher-income landscapers with over \$250k annual revenue and six or more employees. Noting that lower-cost leaf-blowers can cost from \$80-\$300 per unit, small companies could have purchased up to 18 lower-cost leaf blowers per year (for a total of 36 non-gas leaf blowers) solely with the rebate, and higher income landscapers up to 12 lower-cost leaf blowers per year (for a total of 24) solely with the rebate.

This exemption would negatively impact the county and city's Climate Action Plans by delaying its goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, Maryland's Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 requires Maryland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent below 2006 levels by 2031. This exemption would be a setback to achieving this goal by allowing some of the worst pollution-generating equipment to be used past the deadline.

Local air quality would suffer because most leaf blowers have a two-stroke engine, which emits high levels of cancer-causing chemicals, ozone, and fine particulate matter. Professional lawn care services often employ multiple leaf blowers at once, elevating pollutants to hazardous levels. The non-profit Environment New Jersey states that using gas-fired leaf blowers for an hour creates as much pollution as driving a car for 1,100 miles.

Emissions aren't the only hazard. Allowing the continued operation of this equipment will further damage hearing of the operators since leaf blowers generate noise over 100 decibels (anything above 85 db can cause permanent hearing loss). Anyone in the neighborhood forced to listen to this noise for extended periods will be negatively impacted.

I ask you to not support this bill and continue to encourage landscaping companies to take advantage of the generous rebate program and comply with the law.

Sincerely,  
Jen

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Jen Hawse

