

June 17, 2025

Dear Montgomery County Council Members,

I am a resident of Chevy Chase Village, the first municipality in Montgomery County to permanently ban the use of gas-powered leaf blowers year-round. The decision by our 7 Member Board of Managers was unanimous and followed a long period of public outreach, demonstrations of equipment by landscape professionals and comments from residents. The ordinance, passed on December 9, 2019 with a two-year grace period for landscape companies and residents to transition from gas-powered blowers to battery and electric powered equipment. The ban went into effect on January 1, 2022, coincident with a similar ban in Washington, DC. Since that time the Village has experienced a fundamental improvement in the quality of life of its residents. This is due to the significant reduction in noise and pollution from CO2 and particulate carbon, and relief from the year-round assault of high intensity/low-frequency sound waves emitted by gas-powered leaf blowers which have been linked to cardiovascular distress.

In the three years since the Village has adopted the ban, we have had **no** requests from residents to bring back gas-powered blowers. Landscape companies operating in the Village have successfully transitioned to battery-powered equipment, which is competitively priced and more than adequate to do the job. Batteries are now powerful enough to hold a charge for several hours and can be plugged in to recharging units powered by clean energy. The investment by landscape companies in battery powered leaf blowers, including multiple batteries, has more than paid off in savings in fuel and maintenance costs, rebates for trade-ins of old equipment, and the health and well-being of workers. This, along with growing demand for similar legislation throughout the County, led to the Council's passage of Bill 18-22. This provided for a generous, three-year phase-in prior to a total ban to take effect on July 1, 2025. Landscape operators in the County have known since 2019 that a transition away from gas powered blowers was imminent. Any suggestion that more time is needed to phase out this noxious equipment, particularly given the incentives and lead-time the County has already provided to landscape operators is, at best misinformed; at worst it is nothing more than a pretense and an attempt to curry favor with commercial interests that do not have the well-being of the public, and especially their workers, in mind.

I urge you to hold firm to the original bill passed by the Council, with a total, year-round ban on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers to go into effect on July 1 of this year. As a proud Montgomery County resident and taxpayer, I am counting on you to honor your commitment to the public good and to the health and well-being of all its residents.

Sincerely,

Marea Hatzios Grant, PhD
Chair, Environment and Energy Committee
Chevy Chase Village,
MD 20815