

June 18, 2025

Re: Expedited Bill 19-25 Gas Powered Leaf Blowers

From: Meg Spearman, resident of Silver Spring, MD

I am a resident of Wheaton Hills (Silver Spring) and I fail to see the rationale or benefit in delaying the ban on gas powered leaf blowers. The idea that continuing to pollute the air, kick up feces and pollen and dust, and cause nuisance-level noise on a regular basis is somehow a good idea despite passing legislation to the contrary makes absolutely no sense. Businesses have had (over) a full year to make the switch, or use a rake, a broom, or hey – the wind. Studies have shown our yards *need* this organic matter to keep healthy soil, and to support the pollinators that lay eggs in those leaves. Making a pile in the corner of your yard has exceedingly more benefits than all the time and energy (fossil fuels) it takes to gather and move those leaves offsite.

Many of us have kids with asthma and/or allergies; we spend time outside gardening and enjoying what little peace and quiet we get between loudspeakers, car exhausts, construction, and year-round landscaping crews; and/or we work from home, and exercise and walk dogs outside on a regular basis. The gas leaf blowers are a persistent, costly, dangerous nuisance and – most importantly - absurdly unnecessary. Delaying their ban doesn't change that. No one needs a gas leaf blower. Literally no one. No one ever did or ever will. What we do need, however, is more quiet, more clean air, and more pollinators. Ordinances banning blowers all across the country are making this point loud and clear.

Legislation is sometimes passed to spurn innovation or change or affect cultural shifts. The leaf blower is a vestige from the post-colonial status symbol of a highly manicured lawn, and an expensive waste of resources (namely fossil fuels, water) and time, taxing wildlife and neighbors' nerves in the process. The county needs to do a better job communicating the rationale for the legislation already passed, and supporting the transition to alternatives; not by delaying when the ban becomes effective.