



July 9, 2025

Dear Council President Stewart, Vice President Jawando, Councilmembers Alborno, Balcombe, Fani-Gonzalez, Friedson, Glass, Katz, Luedtke, Mink, and Sayles:

The Olney Chamber of Commerce writes to express our support for the proposed Seasonal Exemption to **Bill 19-25**, proposed by Councilmembers Alborno, Luedtke, Balcombe, & Katz.

We commend the County Council for taking steps to reduce pollution and transition to cleaner equipment. The original legislation is well-intentioned and, in the long term, will benefit the environment and public health in Montgomery County. However, the pace of the transition presents serious challenges for local landscaping businesses—many of which are small, family-run operations with limited financial flexibility.

Our members who operate landscaping companies have shared the following concerns:

1. While battery-powered equipment has improved, it is not yet advanced enough to compete with gas-powered blowers in terms of efficiency and durability. Without the Seasonal Exemption, routine fall clean-ups will take significantly longer and ultimately increase prices for county residents.
2. The cost of rapidly replacing entire fleets of gas-powered equipment is a significant financial burden, especially for smaller businesses. The Seasonal Exemption allows operators time to spread out these costs and invest more gradually in electric alternatives.
3. Battery technology continues to evolve rapidly. Allowing for a brief delay in full implementation is likely to result in more affordable, higher-performance options for landscapers in the near future.

In short, we support the broader goals of the gas-powered leaf blower ban, but believe the Seasonal Exemption is a reasonable and necessary step to preserve the competitiveness of local businesses and protect consumers from sharp cost increases during the transition.

Sincerely,

The Olney Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors