



July 14, 2025

Re: Testimony in opposition of Expedited Bill 19-25 relating to the seasonal exemption to use of gas-powered leaf blowers in Montgomery County.

Honorable Members of the Montgomery County Council:

I am writing on behalf of the [Quiet Clean Alliance](#), a coalition of efforts across the country to eliminate gas leaf blowers from our communities. The considerable harms of these tools to public health, workers, and the environment have been well documented. Health and environmental organizations across the country support our goal, as do many equipment manufacturers and landscape contractors who are already using electric blowers.

Most policymakers understand that gas-powered leaf blowers are highly polluting, unhealthy, and disruptive, but may hesitate to act because they've heard outdated rhetoric about high costs, expensive batteries, and underpowered battery technology. Myths like these have been repeated so often they've become conventional wisdom. But they no longer hold true.

The landscaping industry has been resistant to regulation even as it openly supports a transition to battery-powered equipment, and they continue to lobby against common-sense legislation like the 2023 Bill 18-22. Without regulation to protect public health we would still have DDT, three-wheeled ATVs, leaded gas and paint, asbestos, and smoking on airplanes.

Ordinances, like those passed in Washington DC and Baltimore, MD, establish a level playing field, allowing competition to work as it should in setting fair prices for services such as landscaping. This has been shown in the more than 160 municipalities that prohibit gas leaf blowers all or most of the year. We have no evidence of service fees increasing as a result, or landscapers going out of business. Contractors we've spoken with who have made the shift are largely "middle of the pack" with respect to fees. This seems to be true regardless of company size.

We've heard dozens of public hearings on this issue. Debates can easily go down rabbit holes on the hazards of lithium mining, the dangers of batteries, particulars of enforcement, or technical data (e.g., run-times, return on investment, and charging strategies). Mired in these details, the main point often gets lost: Gas leaf blowers are a public health problem with a solution at hand. Viable, cost-effective alternatives are readily available that won't break the bank and won't disrupt local businesses. Phasing out gas-powered blowers is exactly the low-hanging fruit it sounds like. Waiting any longer to address every minor detail would be letting the perfect be the enemy of the good.

We urge you to protect the public health of millions of constituents in Montgomery County by **staying the course with Bill 18-22, passed in 2023**, which approved a ban on the sale and use of gas-powered leaf blowers. Landscapers have known that the implementation date has been set for quite some time and during that time they should have made accommodations to prepare to transition to zero-emission equipment. Introducing a last-minute exemption that would allow gas-powered equipment to continue

being in use goes against all the reasons the original bill was created and is not in the interest of Montgomery County residents and operators of this equipment. And as a former Maryland landscape designer and Certified Professional Horticulturist who worked on residential and commercial projects in Montgomery County, I look forward to seeing more sustainable landscape maintenance practices become the norm.

Thank you on behalf of the Quiet Clean Alliance.

Sincerely,

Jill Bellenger

Steering Committee

Bonnie Sager, Huntington C.A.L.M. (Huntington, NY)

Michael Hall, Quiet Clean PDX (Portland, OR)

Vicki Mann, Quiet Georgia (Atlanta, GA)

Judy Walton, Quiet Clean PDX (Portland, OR)

Jill Bellenger, State Coordinator, Quiet Clean Alliance (Rochester, NY)

Members

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C.H.A.S.E. Santa Cruz

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Sustainable Essex – Quiet

Lawns Campaign

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Florida

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Landscaping in New Jersey

Go Glen Ridge Green

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