

**To: Montgomery County Councilmembers**  
**Re: Expedited Bill 19-25, Noise Control - Leaf Removal Equipment - Seasonal Exemption**  
**Subject: Testimony submitted by Ms. Roberta G Steinman**  
**Date: July 1, 2025**

**I urge you to NOT support the Seasonal Exemption for gas-powered leaf blowers.** I support the ban on the use of combustion engine-powered leaf blowers and leaf vacuums that began on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 in Montgomery County.

**Banning the use of Gas-powered leaf blowers is critical** for better **AIR QUALITY**, reducing **NOISE POLLUTION**, and bringing some **PEACE** back into our neighborhoods. **The adverse consequences of gas-powered leaf blowers affect EVERYONE in our community** – the residents, the workers, and the critters that inhabit our communities.

Gas leaf blowers are a persistent source of air and noise pollution. We hear their loud, high-pitched noise almost the entire year. Additionally, these inefficient gas-engines fill the air with toxic pollutants – not just carbon dioxide, benzene, methane, and other volatile compounds – they also blow all the stuff that's on the ground up into the air: herbicides, fungicides, pesticides and metals, including lead.

Gas-powered blowers produce double the number of decibels and have a lower sound frequency than electric leaf blowers. Because they cause high levels of sound at low frequencies, the roar of gas blowers can be heard 23 houses away from a lawn that's being blown, whereas the sound of electric blowers only will travel six houses away. There are so many eco-friendly alternatives, including electric blowers, rakes, and leaving the leaves on the ground.

When gas leaf blowers are operating in our neighborhood, we have to close our doors and windows instead of simply allowing the fresh air and breeze to cool our homes. My husband and I spend a lot of time outdoors because we are native plant and vegetable gardeners, and there is always outdoor work to do. The gas-powered leaf blowers make working outdoors unpleasant, nerve wracking, and dangerous. The fumes and dust are toxic and the noise is deafening – both for us and for all the pollinators, birds, and insects – and the toxic dust and pollution settles on the plants. As a result, we race back inside every time the blowers show up in our vicinity.

The health consequences of breathing polluted air affects all of us – regardless of age, race, socioeconomic demographic, or species. Everyone in our neighborhood – human or non-human –is harmed by both the noise and the breathing of the exhaust of unnecessary leaf blowers. I live in a walkable neighborhood where many people enjoy being outdoors - walking, running, pushing babies in stroller, walking the dog, and taking their daily exercise regimen. But that pleasurable and healthy activity has become so unpleasant due to the pollution and noise from the ubiquitous gas-powered leaf blowers that we are forced to severely alter or curtail some outdoor activities altogether.

Do not overlook the fact that the noise and toxic fumes generated by gas-powered blowers also impact the health and safety of workers who use them on the job. Landscape workers and others may experience hearing loss and respiratory problems due to extensive exposure to noise and toxic emissions from these gas-powered leaf blowers.

These adverse impacts also impact non-humans. The blower noise, dust, and particulate matter affects the lives of birds, smaller mammals, pollinating insects and other creatures, some of which cannot escape the dust, noise, and fumes.

Some landscaping companies argue that going green and using electric power tools will slightly reduce their efficiency and make them less competitive. This is precisely why a ban will be so beneficial, as it will level the playing field across all companies and not allow a small number of free-riders to profit from the good will of ecofriendly companies.

**No more delays!** Companies have had 2 years to prepare for this. The sale of gas-powered leaf blowers has been banned since July 1, 2024. A rebate program is in place, and it does not require trading in a banned piece of equipment.

Our health, the air we breathe, our well-being is simply more important than the 'illusory' efficiency of gas-powered blowers – 'illusory' because the use of these devices does not factor in their substantial external negative impacts.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted  
Ms. Roberta G Steinman  
Silver Spring, MD 20910



What the County Executive says:

Gas-powered leaf blowers are noisy and create pollutants that contribute to the carbon emissions that heat our atmosphere and make it more difficult to breathe. By adopting electric leaf blowers, we are all playing an active role in reducing harmful air emissions, lessening our dependence on fossil fuels and getting away from a device that contributes to hearing loss, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.