

Testimony by Russell Sturm (home owner) regarding the proposed legislation

Expedited Bill 19-25, Noise Control - Leaf Removal Equipment - Seasonal Exemption

1. I appreciate the good work of this Council in crafting a realistic, practical response in 2023 to the invasion of dangerously loud and highly polluting gas fired leaf blowers in our community.
2. I am alarmed by the Council's consideration of the Bill 19-25 to delay implementation of this well considered law with its reasonable implementation period and financial assistance to commercial lawn services to comply, and I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal that is presently before the Council.
3. Referencing the Council staff's summary of the legislation, I note the following:
 - a. The proposed exemption for weekday use only of the monsters does NOT, in fact, protect homeowners from invasive noise and pollution. In addition to retirees, I – and many of my neighbors – work from home. I cannot schedule work calls or Zoom meetings from my home office. I measure 90 decibels in my living room and my home office when the army of monsters starts to roar. This not only causes me economic harm, but I have documented hearing loss and have experienced debilitating levels of anxiety as noted by my work colleagues and family as a result.
 - b. The proposed legislation is intended to limit the “economic harm” of the law upon professional landscape companies. In fact, I am directly paying the economic cost (the economic externalities in lost work time, lost access to a peaceful home, and harm to my health) that these companies seek to avoid. Their decision NOT to follow the law by delaying the transition to modern technology, and my neighbors' decision to not pay whatever cost is required to support that technology transition is a gross economic injustice. I use a rake. Yet I have been driven indoors by toxic fumes and painful levels of noise while trying to work on my own yard when the monsters are fired up in my neighborhood. That ain't right.
 - c. Advocates of the seasonal exemption claim that there are not appropriate technological solutions available to enable an affordable transition to

modern battery electric leafblowers. **THIS is simply not true as of 2025.** I submit for the Council's consideration this summary of the product offerings available today. It includes packaged multi-battery + high performance electric blowers available from virtually all major manufacturers of commercial grade, high powered lawn equipment designed specifically for use as a fleet for commercial lawn services. I also provide an economic analysis of the initial and maintenance cost of transitioning away from antiquated gas technology. This includes capital and operational costs.

My conclusion of this analysis is that only poorly managed companies would not have taken advantage of the County's generous financial subsidies in order to transition their fleet in order to be in compliance with the current law and in order to be able to compete in a fast shifting market.

It is not the County's job to bail them out of their self-imposed managerial failure.

Further, it would be a gross injustice to the well-managed companies who have made the effort to move forward and operate in compliance with the law.

My questions to the Council:

- What has changed since passage of the law to justify this delay?
- How will the Council address the harm done to companies already in compliance and the neighbors who pay the price every time these monsters are used?

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Thanks again for your registration. The Council would like to confirm that you have been placed on the speakers list for the event listed below. All speakers must adhere to the Council's policies for public hearing speakers, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/about/procedures.html>. Be sure to read them before providing your testimony.

1. **Each speaker will have three (3) minutes. If you are confirmed to speak on multiple agenda items, you will have no more than five (5) minutes. Your testimony on multiple agenda items should be provided when you are called upon for the first agenda item. You should clearly identify the multiple topics that you will be covering, when you begin your testimony.**
2. **Your comments must be limited to issues relevant to the public hearing topic for which you are testifying. If your comments are off-topic, you will be asked to make them on-topic. If you decline to do so, the host may end your testimony.**

If you are providing in-person testimony at the Council Office Building in Rockville, your name is now on the Council's speakers list, and you will be called on by the Council President to present your testimony at the speakers' table. The speaker's list is posted as you enter the Council's Hearing Room. It can also be found online, three hours prior to the hearing at this link: [PHSpeakerList.pdf \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](#)

If you choose to testify virtually, you will receive a separate email providing the Zoom conference information on the afternoon prior to the public hearing. The information will include the phone number and/or link to present audio OR video testimony based on your selected preference. If joining by video,

you may turn on your video once the moderator has called your name. Please mute your mic and turn off your video before the moderator announces the next speaker.

Audio or video testimony provided during the Council's live public hearing is captured in the Council's video archive; however, if you want your testimony included as part of the written record you must submit it in writing prior to the start of the public hearing. Testimony may be sent in one of the following three modes:

1. Upload written, audio or video testimony online
here: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/PHSignUp.html>
2. Mailing address: Council President, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850

For language translation services and reasonable accommodation requests contact Lucia Jimenez at 240-777-7832 at least 72 hours prior to this meeting.

Additional information about the Council's public hearing procedures is available on the Council's website at: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/about/pub.html>.

We thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Montgomery County Council

Public Hearing Office

Telephone: 240-777-7803

Email: Council.PublicHearing@montgomerycountymd.gov

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL. Questions about signing up to speak? Request for accommodations? Anything else? EMAIL Council.PublicHearing@montgomerycountymd.gov OR CALL THE PUBLIC HEARING LINE AT 240-777-7803.

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Expedited Bill 19-25, Noise Control - Leaf Removal Equipment - Seasonal Exemption

DATE Tuesday, July 15, 2025

TIME 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm EDT

WHERE Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Ave, Rockville, MD - Third Floor Hearing Room.
The meeting will also be available via Zoom to enable remote participation.

DESCRIPTION Council Agenda for this public hearing is available [here](#).
Deadline to sign up to speak is July 14, at 2:00pm.
For additional information please see: [Staff Report - Introduction](#)
